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THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF MISSION WORK IN THE MORMON CHURCH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL FACULTY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BACHELOR OF
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BY

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The University of Alberta

April 1967

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ST. STEPHEN'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read and recommend to the General Faculty Council for acceptance, a thesis entitled "THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF MISSION WORK IN THE MORMON CHURCH" submitted by Robert Thomas James Stobie, B.A. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

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April 1967

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INTRODUCTION

It can safely be said that the Christian Church in general is currently passing through a period of introspection, the character and fervor of which hitherto has been unknown. On every side fresh evidence of this spirit of critical self-analysis springs forth almost daily. Spokesmen with varying points of view, both within and without the Church, have produced and continue to produce volumes of material concerned with the question: "What is the mission of the Church in today's world?" For the most part such commentators, critics, spiritual analysts, or whatever we may choose to call them, are anxious to discover how the Church may become more relevant to men who wrestle with the problems of Twentieth Century living.

In the United Church of Canada, for example, there is ample evidence of the desire to engage in such a necessary discipline. Perhaps more than anything else produced by that church of late, the New Curriculum for the Church School would indicate that Christians must continually seek out, develop and put into practical use new and more effective ways of communicating the gospel. This is, after all, the true mission of the Church - that by its worship, study, fellowship and social action the Church may witness, wherever it finds itself, to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps this trend towards self-examination in the churches today may be explained by the fact that Christians are rediscovering something which should never have been forgotten, even momentarily - that mission is the primary reason for the Church's existence. In the light of that understanding, which certainly is being recovered with a

new vitality, it is natural that those concerned should ask themselves whether the present structure and organization of the Church, especially in local congregations, is actually helping or hindering that mission. Colin Williams, discussing this very point in his book Where In The World, uses the following footnote:[1]

> Hans Margull expresses this by saying that "the structures of our congregations have become designed almost exclusively for people to 'come' and not also for people to 'go'. 'Going' has become a separate function, with 'coming' being the norm." This "come structure" is largely responsible, Margull says, for the truth of the observation of the Central Committee of the W.C.C. at its meeting at Rolle in 1951: "The average congregation is apt to be an introverted community which does not think primarily of its obligation to bring the knowledge of Christ to its whole neighborhood and to the whole world, and this introversion is apt to mark the life, thought and leadership of the whole Church. This applies to the younger Churches as well as to the older.
>
> "Even where the obligation is acknowledged and acted upon, such actions tend to take the form of a separate 'mission' supported by the congregation but not regarded as the responsibility of every member."
>
> Margull concludes that "attempts to strengthen our congregations spiritually will be possible and effective only where the whole structure of the congregation is designed in such a way as to show that for Christians to come obviously means also to go: A Christian grows in participation in God's work in the world."

This is the first reason for the writer's choice of this particular thesis topic. It is hoped that an examination of the "mission concept" and the way that concept is put into practice in one particular religious body, will prove to be of some interest and benefit as the Church labors on at the task God has appointed it in carrying out his mission in the world.

The reader may be wondering at the choice of the Mormon Church for such a study. There are at least two reasons for that choice, the first of which arises quite naturally from the fact that the writer

1. Colin W. Williams, Where In The World, p. 60, footnote 12.

spent four years serving a United Church pastorate in Cardston, Alberta, which is the location of the only Mormon Temple in Canada. Living in the "Temple City" has provoked interest, insight and concern which I believe could not have been possible in quite the same way in any other part of our province or country. The oft-heard Mormon claim to being the fastest growing Church in North America, or even the world, may not be proven by the use of unbiased statistical records, but there is no denying the fact that the Mormons are making impressive gains, not only on this continent, but in many parts of the world. Those who belong to other churches would be wise to ask why this should be so. Why should Mormon expansion be so marked when the results of missionary endeavor in most other churches are not nearly so dramatic? The Mormons themselves would answer this question by insisting that their church is the only true church, restored to earth by God some one hundred and thirty-seven years ago.[2] However, for those who cannot accept this argument, a search must be made in other areas for an understanding of Mormon effectiveness and appeal. It is the writer's belief, having had first-hand experience in a Mormon centre such as Cardston, that this effectiveness and appeal are to be explained by the Mormon philosophy and practice of Mission work.

It shall be the purpose of this thesis, therefore, to study the philosophy and practice of mission work in the Mormon Church in the hope that such a study may prove advantageous to those engaged in a rethinking of the whole concept of mission for the Church in our day.

2. It must be noted here that many regard the Mormon position as a Christian heresy at best and, at worst, as no part of the Christian Church at all.

Chapter I

MORMONISM - A CAPSULE SURVEY

(a) A short history of Mormonism

Any consideration of Mormonism, its beliefs and practices, can only be separated with great difficulty from a consideration of the history of this religious group, particularly as it concerns the life of its founder Joseph Smith. If we are to adequately understand the philosophy and practice of mission work in the Mormon Church, then we must first give ourselves to a discussion of Mormon history. Such a discussion, however brief, will at least assist us in placing Mormonism within its proper context and will help to acquaint us with its most notable figures.

Joseph Smith, Jr., son of Joseph and Lucy Smith, was born in Sharon, Vermont, on December 23, 1805. When Joseph was about 11 the family moved to Palmyra, New York, where, a few years later, most of the members of his family joined the Presbyterian Church. Joseph, however, could give himself to no such commitment. He claims, in his autobiographical material, to have been greatly disturbed by the dissensions amongst the various denominations of the Christian Church.[1] In his quest to discover which of the churches, if any, was right, he reports that he became somewhat partial to the "Methodist Sect". However, he still could not determine if any of the denominations possessed the truth. It was while puzzling over which church to join that Smith came upon the following words in James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." These words made a great impact upon Smith for, having given them some consideration, he reports

1. Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story, see page 2.

that he went into a secluded spot in the woods where he knelt down and started to pray. In the course of his prayer Smith claims:

> I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other -- "This is my Beloved Son, hear Him!" 2

Smith apparently regained his composure quickly enough to ask the "Personages" before him which of the sects was right. In answer to this question, the Personage who had first spoken to him is reputed to have replied that he must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and that "all their creeds were an abomination in His sight."[3] Smith was also led to understand that there would be a restoration of the "true" church and that he, under divine guidance, would in some way be the instrument of that restoration.

It apparently came as something of a shock to Smith when he discovered that his experience was questioned and discredited by those to whom he related it. Particularly was this true amongst various church officials, and Smith claims to have fallen victim to a great deal of persecution which continued and increased throughout the years. One may seriously question whether a fourteen-year old boy who made such claims would be taken seriously, but there is no denying that persecution did become a harsh and ugly reality in the early development of the Mormon church. Nor is there any denying that it played a vital role in that development, eventually adding the impetus which only persecution and martyrdom may grant to any such cause.

2. Ibid., page 3
3. Ibid., page 4

However, young Smith persisted in his claims until, on September 21, 1823, he reportedly received a second vision which precipitated the development of the Mormon church. Smith reports that in the evening of the date mentioned a personage appeared at his bedside claiming to be a messenger sent from God. The messenger stated that his name was Moroni and reported to Smith that God had a work for him to do. He declared that Smith's name "should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people."[4] Smith was informed by Moroni that a book, written on gold plates, had been deposited, and that this book included a record of the former inhabitants of the North American continent. Moroni also reported that there were "two stones in silver bows" - which, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what was called the "Urim and Thummim." These had been deposited with the plates and had been prepared for the purpose of translating the message contained on the golden plates.[5] Smith relates that the messenger appeared to him twice more that night, repeating the same message and showing him exactly where the plates had been deposited.

The next day Smith claims to have gone to "the hill Cumorah," outside the village where he lived, and that he found the golden plates, the Urim and Thummim and the breastplate, exactly as Moroni had indicated. However, he was not permitted to remove them from the place at that time. He was told by the angel Moroni, who again appeared to him at this point, that he should return to this place every year at the same time for the next four years. Finally, on September 22, 1827,

4. Ibid., page 8
5. Ibid., see pages 8 and 9

Smith was given the plates by Moroni, with the instruction that he was to guard them carefully until the messenger from heaven should call for them again.[6]

Earlier in that same year Smith had been married to one Emma Hale of Harmony, Pennsylvania. Because of the persecution which supposedly followed his disclosure of having received the plates, he decided to move in with his father-in-law. It was in Harmony that he is alleged to have begun his copying of the characters from the plates and, by means of the Urim and Thummim, to translate some of them. The scope of this capsule history does not permit a detailed discussion of what Joseph Smith actually claimed to be translating from the golden plates. Suffice it to say that he boldly asserted that the characters on the plates were written in altered or "Reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics". In his autobiography Smith records that a Professor Charles Anthon of New York City authenticated the characters supposedly copied from the plates as "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyraic, and Arabic", and affirmed that the translation Smith had made was correct. However, in a footnote to his discussion of this very point, Anthony Hoekema points out that "to combine Arabic script and Egyptian characters (whether hieroglyphic, hieratic, or demotic) would be a linguistic monstrosity."[7] Further to this, in his book The Maze of Mormonism, Walter Martin reproduces a letter written by Charles Anthon in which he states: "The whole story about my having pronounced the Mormonite inscription to be 'reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics' is perfectly false."[8] However, it does not

6. Ibid., see pages 11 to 13
7. Anthony A. Hoekema, Tee Four Major Cults, p. 12
8. Walter R. Martin, The Maze of Mormonism, p. 42

appear that Smith had too much difficulty in inducing others to take an interest in what he was doing. In 1829 he was joined by Oliver Cowdery, a former schoolteacher. Cowdery went to work copying down what Smith dictated to him as he made his alleged translation. In subsequent visitons, both Smith and Cowdery are supposed to have had conferred upon them the priesthood of Aaron (at the hand of John the Baptist) and the Melchizedek priesthood (at the hands of Peter, James and John.)

Smith completed his translation of the golden plates the next year, and on March 26, 1830, The Book of Mormon was put on sale for the first time in a bookstore in Palmyra. Smith had succeeded in convincing another man of his sincerity, and this first printing of The Book of Mormon was financed by one Martin Harris, a farmer, who mortgaged his land to pay for the work. On April 6 of that same year, at Fayette, New York, the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" was officially organized, and was incorporated some time later. At this point there were but six members, all young men. Smith and Cowdery ordained each other as elders and within a month the membership had grown to forty. The centre of the "Saints" operations shortly moved to Kirtland, Ohio, where a temple was later built. Smith claimed to be receiving new revelations on many subjects during this time, and while at Kirtland he compiled and had published the second of the Mormons' sacred books, The Doctrine and Covenants. However, Smith's followers soon began moving farther west and Smith himself allegedly received a revelation in which he was told that Jackson County, Missouri, was "the land of promise."

Many of Smith's followers started to settle in Independence, Missouri, but the local non-Mormon residents did not react favorably to the claim that this land was especially chosen by God for the Mormons. The ensuing disagreement resulted in mob attacks on the Mormons, who consequently moved north and founded the town of Far West, Missouri.

Such clashes between Mormons and non-Mormons continued and open warfare eventually broke out so that the state militia was forced to intervene. Smith and some of the other church leaders were imprisoned. They subsequently escaped and fled to join the rest of the Mormons who had, by this time, moved east to Illinois. In 1839, Smith chose a spot on the Mississippi river as the site of their new headquarters. He named it Nauvoo, which he insisted was Hebrew for "beautiful place." In Nauvoo another temple was built and missionary activity was strengthened and intensified.

Trouble persisted in following Smith, however, and soon reared its head again in the form of the Nauvoo Expositor, a newspaper which constantly published material of a decidedly anti-Mormon flavor. Smith finally ordered his followers to demolish the Expositor's press and to destroy every copy of the paper which could be found. This action predictably brought about Smith's second arrest by the state. He was again released, but later arrested for a third time, along with his brother Hyrum. Together they were placed in the city jail in Carthage, Illinois, a short distance from Nauvoo. There, on June 27, 1844, a mob stormed the jail, killing both Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Instead of stopping the spread of Mormonism, this unfortunate incident only served to advance its cause, for now the Mormon Church had a bona fide martyred hero.

Naturally, the biggest issue facing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints following the death of Joseph Smith, was the question of who would assume the role of leadership. Signey Rigdon, who had joined the church in Kirtland, Ohio, had worked in close cooperation with Smith and claimed to have been named first counselor to President Smith. He based his right to be the new leader of the church on that claim. However, Brigham Young countered by claiming that the authority of the presidency now lay in the hands of the "twelve apostles". Young was the president of this group and the "Saints" were disposed to accept his leadership. In 1844 he became the second president of the church.

In the meantime, Mormon fortunes in Illinois had continued to deteriorate. Soon they were notified by the state that they must leave Nauvoo. Under the leadership of Brigham Young they made plans to move west, and in February of 1846 the journey was begun. What transpired was certainly to become one of the epic pioneer ventures in a country already abounding in settler saga, romance and adventure. To quote Anthony Hoekema:

> "There were many hardships along the way: cold, exposure, storms, Indians, quarrels, apostasy, inadequate food and clothing. On July 24, 1847, the caravan arrived at the Salt Lake Valley in Utah; when President Young first saw the valley, he expressed his satisfaction in the memorable words, "This is the place!" He then proceeded to locate the site of the proposed new city (since known as Salt Lake City) about ten miles east of the lake." 9

Since that time Salt Lake City has been the headquarters of the Mormon Church. From such humble beginnings as these the church increased its size to 140,000 members by the time of Young's death in 1877. It has continued to grow, flourish and spread to many parts of the world.

9. Anthony A. Hoekema, The Four Major Cults, page 15

Before proceeding any further with this study, an explanation of our use of the word "Mormon" is in order. The Mormons make frequent reference to the many denominations within the Christian Church, using the fact as an argument to prove that the Church fell into an apostate condition early in its history. They regard division in doctrinal and other matters as one proof of apostasy. However, it is not widespread knowledge that the Church which Joseph Smith founded in 1830 has itself been subdivided into six groups. It is not unfair to say that there is generally a grudging admission of this fact among Mormons. It is not our purpose to discuss each of these six groups, only to indicate their existence. Briefly they are:

(1) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. These people are referred to as "Brighamites" by the other groups, since they recognize Brigham Young as the authorized successor to Joseph Smith, but they do not use the name of themselves. This is by far the largest LDS body of the six.

(2) Second in strength of numbers is The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which has its headquarters in Independence, Missouri. This group is known as the "Josephite" Church because of its insistence that the succession of the prophetic office must continue in the family line of Joseph Smith.

(3) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints known as "Cutlerites".

(4) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, known as "Strangites".

(5) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, known as "Bickertonites".

Each of the latter three groups takes it distinctive name from the man who assumed leadership as the groups separated themselves from the rest of the Church.

(6) The Church of Christ, Temple Lot "Hedreckite". This group also has its headquarters in Independence, Missouri, and claims to be the only true church because it holds the lot set apart as the site of the Temple of Zion by Joseph Smith in 1831.

It is the group which followed the leadership of Brigham Young which refers to itself most often as the "Mormon Church." As is pointed out above, they are the largest group numerically. They have no association whatsoever with the other five groups and consider them to be apostate. With a few exceptions these are the folk who have made their way into Canada, settling for the most part in Ontario and South Alberta where they erected and dedicated their Temple at Cardston, in 1923. They maintain close connections with Salt Lake City, Utah, which is church headquarters for them also. It is to these people that we shall be referring throughout this treatise when we use the word "Mormon."

(b) <u>The world picture</u>

Naturally there are more Mormons in the United States of America than any other place in the world. There, of course, the highest concentration of Mormon population is to be found in Utah, although there are members of the Church in every state of the Union. The Mormon Church has established seventeen Missions across the continent

as well as one in Hawaii. Outside the United States Mormon population is very significantly reduced. Those countries which accommodate the largest numbers of Mormons are Canada, Mexico, the British Isles, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. In his book The Four Major Cults, Anthony Hoekema includes some statistics which show that the total membership of the Mormon Church at the end of 1962 was 1,965,786.[10] Of that number he reports that only 252,464 were to be found outside the United States. In other words the foreign membership of the Mormon Church at that time was only one-eighth the total membership, or, to put it another way, seven of every eight Mormons in the world were then to be found in the United States.

In those areas outside the United States where Mormons are most numerous, missionary activity was given its earliest concerted effort in Britain and the Scandinavian countries. By providing financial assistance Brigham Young encouraged convert immigration from these two places to swell the ranks of the Church in Utah. Mission work has been carried on in England for well over a century now, the first missionaries being sent out by Joseph Smith in 1837. Following an auspicious start there, the number of converts was drastically reduced by the above-mentioned immigration to the United States. A modern revival of Mormon missionary endeavors in England has been instigated by T. Bowring Woodbury who became mission president in 1958. Since then the Church has been showing an impressive record of conversions. William Whalen states that the Mormons baptized 16,830 members in 1962 and that the Church claimed some 50,000 to 55,000 members in Great

10. Ibid., page 16

Britain by 1963.[11] The Church is erecting twenty-five to thirty chapels a year in Britain and a Temple was recently dedicated near London.

Not long after the English Mission was underway the first missionaries were sent to the Scandinavian countries where they also received a good hearing and became well established. Missionaries then went to Switzerland and Italy. The Swiss mission took hold but the Italian did not. By 1851 missions had been started in Australia, France, Germany and Latin America, by 1852 in India, Malta and New Zealand, and by 1853 in South Africa. Whalen reports that eighty percent of Mormon converts in New Zealand are Maoris.[12]

Missionary work was begun in South America just over forty years ago, but more than half of the membership of the Church there has joined within the past few years. Most of the Mormons in South America live in Argentina, Brazil or Uruguay. Whalen states the following:

> As late as 1959 the annual harvest of converts on this continent averaged fewer than 1,000. The Church enrolled 3,000 members in Brazil in 1958; only five years later their number had risen to 15,000. More than 300 Mormon missionaries labor in this area. 13

There is a total of seven South American Missions now in operation. Missions are also operative in Central America and Mexico. In Canada there are two Missions; the Canadian Mission in eastern Canada, centred mainly in Ontario, and the Western Canadian Mission which draws most of its membership from South Alberta.

A Mission has been opened recently in Nigeria, but missionaries in such places generally reserve their efforts for work amongst white

11. Ibid., pages 231 and 232
12. Ibid., page 233
13. Ibid., page 234

Africans. Negroes are ineligible to enter the priesthood of the Mormon Church because Mormons believe that God has placed a curse, or "the mark of Cain," upon them. South Africa is the only other part of Africa where Mormon missionaries are active.

The Foreign Missions operated by the Mormon Church today are located in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Denmark, France, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tahiti, Tonga and West Germany.

(c) The growth of Mormonism - some statistics

The growth of the Mormon Church over the last one hundred and thirty-six years has been impressive to say the least. The company of Mormon pioneers who struggled through from the eastern states to Salt Lake in 1847 numbered one hundred and forty-three men and three women. They were soon joined by reinforcements for, as we have seen, the Church encouraged and even financed the immigration of converts from foreign countries. By virtue of its energetic mission system the Mormon Church now outstrips nearly all other North American churches in gaining members. It is only exceeded by the Jehovah's Witnesses and possibly by some branches of the Pentecostal Church or the smaller fundamentalist sects. William Whalen reports that since 1951, when David O. MacKay became president, the Church has enjoyed an unprecedented rate of growth.[14] In this sixteen year period the Church has more than doubled the number of stakes[15] in operation, and during the

14. Ibid., page 18
15. The organizational structure of the Mormon Church will be discussed in Chapter IV of this thesis, but the reader should be aware of the meaning of the following terms:
    (a) Ward - corresponds to a congregation or parish in other churches.
    (b) Stake - a regional grouping of wards. A stake corresponds to a presbytery or diocese though, generally speaking, it is not nearly so large numerically or geographically.

ninety-four years of MacKay's life membership in the Church has multiplied approximately twenty times.

Five years ago the Mormon Church was building and dedicating an average of one ward chapel per week. There were approximately 12,000 missionaries in the field around the world. In 1962 missionaries were responsible for bringing in 115,000 new converts, an increase of some 26,000 over the previous record set in 1961.[16] Of this total, approximately 105,000 were converts from mission field areas and 10,000 from established stakes. It is evident, from a study of the most recent statistics which follow, that this rate of increase continues to climb. Conversions are being made at an impressive rate, especially in comparison with what was being done about thirty-five years ago. In 1933, the Church had only 525 missionaries in the field and gained only 7,000 converts.[17]

The most recent statistics available, which are over a year old now, were revealed by the 136th Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints held in Salt Lake City on April 6, 1966.[18] These figures are official as of December 31, 1965. The Annual Conference reported the following statistics:

Membership of the Church:

Stakes	-	1,977,418
Missions	-	418,514
		2,395,932

16. William J. Whalen, The Latter-Day Saints In the Modern Day World - see pages 18 and 234
17. Ibid., page 18
18. 136th Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Report - see pages 6 to 9

Church Growth in 1965:

Children:	Blessed (age 1 month)	61,216	
	Baptized (age 8 years)	49,413	
Converts Baptized:	(Stake & Missions)	82,455	19.

Number of Stakes: - 414 (an increase of 14 in the year)

Number of Wards	- 3,301)	
	)	3,897
Number of Independent Branches in Stakes	) 596)	

Number of Mission Branches - 2,137

Number of Full-Time Missions - 74

Members holding the Aaronic Priesthood:

Deacons	106,605	
Teachers	74,720	
Priests	108,119	289,444

Members holding the Melchizedek Priesthood:

Elders	195,085	
Seventies	22,841	
High Priests	63,880	281,806

Total number of members holding the Priesthood: 571,250 - an increase of 17,230 in the year.

19. The Handbook for Stake Missions makes the following comment regarding converts on page 21:
For uniformity of reporting, a convert is defined as:
A. Any person twelve years of age or over who is baptized and confirmed, whose parents, one or both, are members.
B. Any person eight years of age or over who is baptized and confirmed, whose parents are not members of the Church.

Missionaries:

Foreign	- 12,108	
Local (Full-time & part-time)	- 477	(these are stake missionaries serving in a mission area)
Stake	- 5,580	
	18,165	

Number of missionaries called during 1965 - 6,044

Having had a brief introductory look at the history, develoment and present numerical strength of the Mormon Church, let us now turn to a consideration of the Mormon philosophy of mission.

Chapter II

PHILOSOPHY OF MISSION

(a) What is the Mormon philosophy of mission?

Mormons (Latter-Day Saints) are people from all walks of life, and they take their religion seriously. They try to practice its principles in their daily lives.

One of their endeavors individually and collectively has been and is to share the "Restored" Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people.

Nearly every Mormon has the uniqueness of being a missionary in the sense of always being ready and anxious to explain his religion to all non-Mormons.

A Mormon believes it to be his or her responsibility to spread the new concept of life as it has been revealed from Heaven to Joseph Smith and his successors.

This new concept of life, they believe, will, if followed, bring peace, satisfaction and happiness to mankind.

Mormonism has what it believes to be the answers to man's origin, man's purpose here on earth and man's destiny in a continued existence as an individual identity after this life.

It is a philosophy that gives the Mormon a purposeful life. Birth into this life is a glorious opportunity. Death loses its horror, and the family unit is eternal. 1

The above is a good, concise statement of the Mormon's attitude toward his faith and his responsibility to share that faith with others. While the non-Mormon may not agree that Mormonism has the answers to questions concerning man's origin, purpose and destiny, there is no need to discredit the sincere Mormon's humanitarian motive in seeking to share with others those things which he believes will lead to abundant and eternal life. Mormonism, as all other religious systems, has its share of advocates who seek to propagate the faith for the wrong reasons, but it is the writer's belief that sincere Mormons carry out the obligation of their church membership with the highest of intentions.

If we are to gain a better understanding of the Mormon motive for Mission we must take our lead from two key phrases contained in the above quotation. These are "the 'Restored' Gospel of Jesus Christ",

1. R.S. Howells, The Mormon Story, page 146

and "the new concept of life." Both of these phrases imply that something has happened to affect the original gospel message proclaimed by Jesus Christ and the life which results from faith in that message and in his person.

The Mormons believe that Jesus accomplished a purpose of the greatest significance when he lived upon this earth and carried out his work of atonement and redemption. They believe that Jesus established his Church while conducting that earthly ministry.

The Church was an organization through which his followers could work out their salvation and receive help and comfort, for they were not to be left in an unorganized condition. The Church was a necessary help and guide for each individual seeking to walk the narrow way which leads to life. 2

The organization of this first century church has developed along the lines indicated in scripture.[3] The sixth Article of Faith of the Mormon Church reads as follows: "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz: Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.[4]

He placed various officers in his Church with specific duties to perform. They were commanded not only to preach the gospel in all the world, but also to watch over those who joined the Church, even as shepherds of the flock guiding them in the way of salvation and guarding them from "wolves" who might enter the fold. These officers were headed by the Apostles, and from the scriptural record it was obvious that the Lord intended that living Apostles should continue in the Church, to provide constant inspired guidance. 5

The prophets in the early Church were, in many instances, the Apostles themselves.

2. M.E. Petersen, Which Chuch Is Right? page 1
3. See Ephesians 4: 11 - 12
4. Joseph Smith, The Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
5. Petersen, Which Church Is Right?, page 1

The Savior had no thought of leaving his newly organized Church without the guidance of heaven. He realized that he soon would leave mortality and ascend to his Father in heaven.

So prophets were placed in this new Christian Church. Their function was the same as that of the ancient prophets, that is to receive current revelation from the Lord for the direction of the people as their needs arose. Without such guidance from heaven, the Church might go astray. 6

So it was, the Mormons believe, that the original organization of the Church, with its various officers and ordinances, was intended to carry on its activity until such time as all people had attained the "unity of the faith" spoken about in the letter to the Ephesians.[7]

The number of Apostles, who were the chief officers in the early Church, was once more fixed at the original number of twelve upon the election of Matthias who replaced the defected Judas. This number of twelve Apostles retains its significance in the organizational structure of the Mormon Church to this day. Because the Apostles were commissioned by their Lord to go into all the world and preach to every creature, it was not possible for them to remain in any one place to oversee the spiritual progress of their new converts. Therefore, a form of local church government had to be set up to conduct such work in their absence. The Apostles soon began to appoint local church officers who could carry on the work of the Church in each area. These officers were known as Bishops or presiding elders and were given authority on a purely local basis. Bishops were most often appointed to jurisdiction over larger congregations, presiding elders over the smaller ones.

6. Ibid., page 2
7. Ephesians 4: 13

The picture of the early Church, then, was one of many branches in many cities, presided over by local offiers known as bishops or elders, with men of general authority or jurisdiction, namely the Twelve Apostles, having over-all supervision. 8

It was at this point, according to the Mormons, that opposition began to arise which led to the eventual corruption of the Christian Church. Persecutions of Christians became commonplace, both at the hands of the Jews and the Romans. Many lost their lives, including the Apostles. After some time the only Apostle left alive was John, who had been predeceased by both Peter and Paul. John, the Mormons believe, was sent from Ephesus to the island of Patmos, where he continued his work until he was relieved of his ministry by the Lord. The reason given for John's withdrawal is that the Church had succumbed to evil practices and perversions of its gospel. Such things had come about, the Mormons believe, as a result of the opposition and persecution the Church had encountered, and as a result of the fact that the voice of living prophecy had been cut off and the priesthood ended with the death of the Apostles. Mark Petersen makes the following reference:

It will be remembered that nearly every one of the epistles of the Twelve had been written to combat some form of apostasy in the Church. A careful reading of them will reveal this fact. Some members denied the Christ, others no longer believed in a resurrection, the doctrines of the Jews had corrupted much of the Christian procedure, the glamor of the pagan rites crept into the Christian rituals. The true doctrine of God was lost. Philosophy from Greece had almost argued away the simple truths of Divinity. Man was rejecting the Christ and his Church and setting up teachings and forms of his own. 9

However, all of this was to be expected, claim the Mormons. While upon earth Jesus proclaimed his gospel and organized his Church, knowing

8. Petersen, Which Church Is Right?, page 6
9. Ibid., page 7

full well that such wickedness would cause his Church to be taken from the earth. At the risk of sounding insensitive, one is tempted at this point to ask why God should have provided such an inadequate and ineffective witness in the person of his own Son, costing him his life as it did. Why should the work Christ did and the Church he founded have been so quick to flounder and disintegrate, never to revive again for some sixteen or seventeen hundred years? How unbecoming of God, who has continued to reveal himself to men throughout the ages of their history, to leave himself so long without a witness! Such a stand as this implies a complete misunderstanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

It is not our purpose to discuss the further disintegration of the Christian Church, according to the Mormon theory. Such a discussion may be found in the pamphlet entitled Which Church Is Right?, to which we have already referred. This pamphlet is left in the homes of all those visited by Mormon missionaries and is readily available. In any event, the Mormons believe that by virtue of intensified persecution, the influence of alien philosophies, and dissensions within its ranks, the whole Church slowly but surely collapsed into a state of apostasy from which it was not to be revived until Joseph Smith received his revelations and consequently reestablished the true Church on April 6, 1830 in Fayette, New York. The above description of Church development, as sketchy as it may be, is necessary if we are to understand why the Mormons feel as they do about their obligation to propagate their faith.

The Mormons believe that God restored his true Church to earth through Joseph Smith and that he has since appointed modern prophets and Apostles to carry on the work of that Church. Alvin R. Dyer writes as follows:

> The kingdom, or Christ's Church has been set up as a result of the restoration of the gospel unto the prophet Joseph Smith, wherein divine messengers were sent from the presence of God for the restoring all truth and authority needed to establish a dispensation of the gospel.
>
> The promise of this statement "precludes" (sic) the fact that an apostasy or "Falling Away", from the kingdom, which Christ established while he was upon the earth and which he left with his Apostles, transpired, thus necessitating a restoration or re-bestowal of the keys and knowledge in a new dispensation of time far removed from that in which the apostasy occurred. This fact is attested to by John the Revelator.
>
> "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.
>
> Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters."
> (Rev. 14: 6-7) 10

So it is that firm belief in their Church as the one, true, restored Church of Jesus Christ, is the motive behind the ambitious Mormon Mission program. In the twentieth section of The Doctrine and Covenants[11] we read the following:

10. Alvin R. Dyer, The Challenge, page 73

11. The "Four Standard Works" of the Mormon Church are: (1) The Bible - used mainly in King James Version. The Eighth Article of Faith states: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly..."; (2) The Book of Mormon - "Articles of Faith, number 8: "...we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God"; (3) The Doctrine and Covenants - (or Book of Commandments) contains modern revelations, mainly transcribed directly by Joseph Smith as he claimed to receive them from God; (4) The Pearl of Great Price - containing sections from the revelations, narrations and translations of Joseph Smith.

And gave unto him, (Joseph Smith) commandments which inspired him; and gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon; which contains a record of a fallen people and of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles and unto the Jews also; which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them - 12

The Mormons believe that in the record of this revelation to Joseph Smith the Lord gave the reason for missionary work. They further believe that their responsibility as heralds of God is to go forth among men in faith, inspired and guided by the power of the Holy Ghost, to arouse an interest in men's hearts. Consequently they are to follow up that interest so that such persons may become members of the Church and of the Kingdom of God through repentance and baptism.

Therefore, having so great a witness, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter come to a knowledge of this work. And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life. 13

This is the Mormon belief and hope - a belief and hope which inspires their missionary zeal. To quote Alvin Dyer:

Talk about promises; talk about blessings. As this great power was deposited in his Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, it became operative for the saving of men's souls.

"But those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation (Doctrine and Covenants 20: 15)"

This work which is responded to voluntarily by our missionaries' proclaiming of the gospel, is not just an ordinary pursuit. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the power that will enable men to prepare themselves for the successful fulfillment of this life's purpose and for the life to follow this one. 14

12. The Doctrine and Covenants Section 20: 7-10, page 30 (parentheses my own)
13. The Doctrine and Covenants 20: 13-14, page 30
14. Dyer, The Challenge, pages 58-59

As has already been mentioned, while one may disagree most heartily with the doctrinal basis upon which such a Missionary program is founded, it is another matter when one comes to challenge the sincerity with which this program is carried out. There is obviously a distinct concern on the part of many Mormons that others should come to understand the gospel as they interpret it, as witness the following statement by Elder John Morgan:

> Knowing these facts, the life of every good and true man, as was Paul, would be rendered miserable at the thought that so many millions of the human family must irretrievably perish and be subject to torture throughout all the eternities to come; but understanding the great principle of the mission of our Savior to the prison world, they can rejoice in the fact that the plan of salvation is a complete one. They have hope that not only in this life, but in the life to come, the gospel will be preached and men taught its precepts. 15

A final quotation from Alvin Dyer will complete this section of our consideration.

> From the standpoint of committed purpose, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has received the greatest challenge ever given to a people here upon this earth. This challenge is summarized by the Lord in one of the revelations, D & C 45: First, that the gospel has been restored and the covenant given to be light to the world. In other words the Spirit of God has been poured out upon all flesh producing what we have come to regard as an "age of enlightenment." Secondly, to be a standard for the Lord's people that the Church from within may grow strong. This to us as members of the Church means a call to a labor of excellence that other members may respond fully to the opportunities of their places in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father. For as this response grows through such a vital program as enlistment, or the searching out and activation of each and every member, with a full realization that "I am My Brother's Keeper," then the Church grows strong from within. Thirdly, that the gentiles may see it. This means, as I take it, that through the great proselyting program of the Church, with every member truly becoming a missionary, the gospel may be conveyed to the gentiles. Lastly, that as a people, as we are directed by the oracles of God, we may prepare ourselves and the world for the second coming of the Master. 16

15. Elder John Morgan, The Plan of Salvation, page 25
16. Dyer, The Challenge, page 175

The convinced Mormon fully believes that there is a magnificent promise conveyed to all who engage themselves in missionary work. Inspiration and strength are received from the belief that a missionary is uniquely set apart for his task, and granted the gifts and blessings which follow such setting apart at the hands of one of the general authorities of the Church. This setting apart is believed to be the same as if it had been performed by the Lord himself.

Having given at least cursory examination to the reasons why Mormons feel that they have authority to engage in such an ambitious mission program, it would now seem logical to say a word about what they hope to accomplish by this activity. To what end do the Mormons believe their efforts should lead them?

The Mormons are convinced that Jesus knew the kingdom he established on earth would not endure. They refer to the 24th chapter of Matthew's gospel for evidence with which to back their contention that Christ spoke of the days just prior to his second coming as the time for the gospel to be spread amongst all nations. That time, they believe Jesus indicated, would be the time spoken of in the apocalyptic writings of Daniel - a time characterized by desolation brought about by the abominations placed in the hearts and minds of men by Satan, the propagator of false teachings, false power, deception and confusion. To quote Alvin Dyer:

> Scriptural evidences of the fact that the kingdom which Christ established when he was upon the earth in the flesh, is <u>not the same as the one referred to by Daniel are conclusive</u>!

This is significant when the fact is realized that the Christ specifically referred to the prophecy of Daniel, concerning the kingdom of the latter days, (his kingdom - surely there is none better qualified to state.) Why should he not merely have referred to the kingdom which he actually set up as the one to endure - this he would not do, for actually the kingdom which was to endure and which after it had been finally established, would not be given to another people, would be withheld until that time just prior to the glorious second coming of the Master. 17

The Mormons believe that this is the kingdom which was re-established through Joseph Smith when the Lord revealed himself to their prophet and gave him the "restored" gospel of Jesus Christ embodying a "new concept of life."

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Daniel 7:27)

This kingdom of the "latter days", say the Mormons, will never end, for it constitutes the kingdom established in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times and the final restitution of all things.[18] Mormons believe it to be their responsibility to bring the claims of this kingdom before all people.

It is not difficult to understand the fact that since the gospel of Jesus Christ has now been restored to earth again for the everlasting benefit of mankind and will never be taken away again, that this period, or the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, is of tremendous significance to all races of men both living and dead. It follows, with equal ease to understand, that God's people, those who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have had placed upon them important responsibilities. 19

Elder John Morgan, writing in his booklet The Plan of Salvation, points out the Mormon belief that the concept of salvation espoused by his church is a plan of salvation offered to all.

17. Ibid., page 75
18. The Doctrine and Covenants, sections 27-90
19. Alvin R. Dyer, The Challenge, page 76

God being no "respector" (sic) of persons, it would be manifestly unjust for one portion of the human family to have the privilege of hearing the sound of the gospel in this life, while so great a proportion never heard it, and be under condemnation for the fact. No; the plan of salvation is complete, and reaching from our preexistent state, applies to our present condition, and will extend to the future state, until every son and daughter of Father Adam has had ample opportunity to embrace its tenets and live in accordance with its spirit. 20

The Mormon Church claims to be reproducing its membership through conversions approximately every fifteen years. By virtue of what they believe to be their committed destiny, the Mormons are convinced that the growth of their church cannot be stopped or slowed dow. The obligation to prepare the earth for the second coming of Christ is a challenge which they believe cannot be escaped. Their claim to be making an effort to carry the message to all people of the world is very much in question, for they do not carry on missionary work in countries which have not been touched by the missionary endeavors of other churches. However, their report of more than 18,000 missionaries who are engaged in spreading their gospel in many parts of the world is an impressive one. They believe that the way is being prepared for them among the nations where they do not at present engaged in mission activity. It is their conviction that in due time every nation and race of people will have opportunity to hear and accept their "message of restoration" and will thereby find salvation.

(b) <u>The Mormon concepts of salvation and eschatology</u>

The third and fourth Articles of Faith of the Mormon Church state the following:

We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

20. <u>Op. cit.</u>, page 25

We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of Hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit. 21

At first glance the above might appear to indicate that the Mormons should be classified as universalists. However, the facts of the matter are not quite so simple as they might seem to the casual observer. In effect, what the Mormons really believe in is a twofold system of salvation, i.e., general salvation and individual salvation. General salvation may be defined as salvation from physical death through resurrection. This salvation, the Mormons believe, is granted to everyone. However, when one understands what the concept of general salvation implies, it may quickly be seen that it is not at all what other churches believe concerning the salvation of mankind. General salvation, as Anthony Hoekema points out,[22] involves the restoration of mankind in company with all living creatures, from the mortal state of existence to the immortal. Man does nothing to receive this type of salvation, it is simply bestowed upon him. Nothing he does, or does not do, can change the fact that he is rendered immortal. However, the state of this immortal existence varies greatly, depending upon the kind of life one has lived before his physical death and consequent resurrection. This brings us to a consideration of what is implied by the Mormon concept of individual salvation and how one receives such salvation.

21. Elder John Morgan, The Plan of Salvation, see page 31
22. Anthony A. Hoekema, The Four Major Cults, page 58

Mormons obviously reject the doctrine of salvation by faith, as witness these words from the third Article of Faith: "all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."[23]

This is not to say that Mormons believe in salvation without faith. In Mormonism one is saved by faith and works, with the emphasis very definitely on the works. Mormons do believe that one must have faith in Jesus Christ (as they conceive of him) in order to be saved, but it is not unfair to say that faith in Christ must also go hand in hand with faith in Joseph Smith. Section 135:3 of The Doctrine and Covenants states the following: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it."[24] However, having made this reference, it still must be repeated that the main emphasis in the religion of the Mormons is on works. Christ's atonement has the general effect of rendering all men immortal, but all men do not receive salvation of the individual type. Individual salvation, as the aforementioned Articles of Faith indicate, is also dependent upon: (1) faith in Jesus Christ and allegiance to his commandments, (2) repentance and turning away from all future sin, (3) baptism by immersion at the hands of a member of the Priesthood, and (4) the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by the authorized laying on of hands by one holding the required authority - that is, by a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood. However, even then not all those who attain individual salvation will experience the same life in the hereafter. That life will be characterized by gradations, or higher and

23. Elder John Morgan, The Plan of Salvation, page 31
24. The Doctrine and Covenants, page 252

lower degrees of "exaltation." That is to say, not all those who are saved enter the same one of the three Mormon heavens, or the "Three Glories" as they are called. Mormons believe that the life hereafter is dependent upon a person's merit or worth. Hugh B. Brown, writing in the booklet "Mormonism", says the following:

"The life we are to experience hereafter will be the result of the life we lead in this world; and as here men exhibit infinite gradations of faithful adherence to the truth, and of servility to sin, so in the world beyond the grave gradations will exist. Salvation grades into exaltation, and every soul shall find place and condition as befits him. Mormonism affirms, on the basis of direct revelation from God, that graded degrees of glory are prepared for the souls of men, and that these comprise in decreasing order the Celestial, the Terrestrial, and the Telestial kingdoms of glory, within each of which are orders or grades innumerable. These several glories - Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial - are comparable to the Sun, the moon and the stars, in their beauty, worth, and splendor. Such a condition was revealed to the Apostle Paul: 'There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. ....' - I Corinthians 15: 40-42. Thus it is provided in the economy of God, that to progression there is no end." 25

As the above passage indicates, the highest degree of salvation attainable makes possible life in the Celestial kingdom. When one gains this degree of "exaltation" one participates in the same kind of life which God himself possesses. In other words, one becomes as God - or, to put it more accurately still, one becomes a god. Eligibility for this highest of all degrees of salvation implies that one has successfully obeyed all the commandments of God.

One more comment must be added before we may leave this brief consideration of individual salvation in its highest state. Such salvation is very much dependent upon the proper kind of marriage

25. Hugh B. Brown, Mormonism, page 44

relationship. To be eligible for life in the Celestial kingdom a man or a woman must have a wife or a husband and such couples must be sealed to each other in marriage, both for time and eternity. It is not the writer's purpose to engage in a discussion of celestial marriage, but it must be understood that, for the Mormons, there are two kinds of marriage. Marriage for time, or marriage performed outside the temple, will be brought to an end by death. The partners in such a marriage relationship will be single in the immortal state and will live as angels rather than gods. In other words, such persons will not attain the fullness of exaltation in the hereafter. The earthly children of such parents will be left without parents in the future life unless they happen to be adopted by parents who have been sealed in marriage for eternity.

Marriage for time and eternity can only be performed in the temple by a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The partners in such a marriage relationship are sealed to each other for eternity. Their union in the state of exaltation will result in the birth of "spirit children". They shall have reached the highest degree of salvation possible. The Doctrine and Covenants states in section 132:20:

> Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them." 26

There may be some exceptions to the above but, generally speaking, the fullness of salvation, implying as it does the attainment of the stature of godhood, is dependent upon marriage in a temple

26. Op. cit., page 241

ceremony. Obviously, the Christian doctrine of salvation by grace has been replaced by a doctrine of salvation by works. The legal footwork required to get those poor souls in a state of "unwedded bliss" through this maze is truly amazing. Even Jesus himself is "married off" by the Mormons so as to leave no questions unanswered.

We are now quite naturally brought to a consideration of what happens to those persons who, for one reason or another, do not have the opportunity to hear and accept the "restored gospel" as proclaimed by proponents of the Mormon faith. Mormons do not hesitate to proclaim that they are the only true people of God on earth, and that those who are not members of their Church must come into membership, either while living or after death, if they are to be saved. This position implies that missionary work continues after death in the spirit world, and is perhaps the main reason for the writer's decision to include this brief discussion of the Mormon concepts of salvation and eschatology.

As has already been mentioned, the Mormons believe that baptism is one of the things required before salvation becomes possible. However, baptism in the Mormon Church is not restricted to the living only, but is also practiced for the dead. As such it comprises one of the truly distinctive doctrines of the Mormon Church.[27] Baptism for the dead is a temple ordinance in which the living are baptized as substitutes for the dead, that is, for those who have died without knowledge of the "restored gospel". This baptism is carried out by immersion and is performed in a font lying below ground level and symbolizing the graves

27. It should be noted, however, that precedent for this practice may be found in I Corinthians 15: 29.

of the dead. These proxy-baptisms are carefully recorded and are attended by witnesses. The practise of baptism for the dead is held to be of such vital importance by the Mormons that they believe their own salvation to be dependent upon the conscientious practice of this temple ordinance.[28] Mormons, therefore, feel constrained to work for the salvation of the deceased in their own family line. This explains the great deal of effort, time and money which is expended on genealogical studies by the Mormon Church. The Mormons define genealogy as "the science of identifying people." In 1894 The Genealogical Society of the Mormon Church was first organized on a very modest basis. Since that time it has expanded its work to fantastic proportions. The work of the Society is given impetus by the desire of many Mormons to identify those who have even the slightest connection with themselves, so that by proxy baptism these folk may be granted the chance for salvation in the future life. Benjamin Alward describes the work of the Genealogical Society as follows:

> The purposes of the Society are benevolent, educational, and religious, pecuniary profit not being the object; benevolent in collecting, compiling, establishing and maintaining a genealogical library for the use and benefit of the members of the Church and others; educational in disseminating information regarding genealogical matters; religious in acquiring records of deceased persons in connection with ordinances of the religion of the Restored Church. [29]

The salvation of the dead who are baptized by proxy is dependent upon whether or not they accept the baptism received on their behalf. If they do accept it, it is counted exactly as if they had acted for themselves in receiving baptism. However, not all those who are

28. See The Doctrine and Covenants 128:15, page 234
29. Benjamin Alward, A Look At Mormonism, page 61

baptized by proxy will attain exaltation or the celestial glory. As with those who are baptized in this life, salvation is based upon merit or worth. The Mormons believe that Christ will bring the gospel to those in the spirit world who were not granted the opportunity to hear it upon earth. Those spirits will then be given the opportunity to repent and believe in him. However, even though one should repent and believe, his salvation is not possible unless someone has been baptized on his behalf. It is interesting to reflect upon what influence this "saviour complex" has had in inspiring the missionary zeal of the Mormon Church.

The Tenth Article of Faith gives a very brief summary of Mormon eschatology:

> We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this (the American) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory. 30

The limitations of this thesis do not permit anything more than a passing reference to the eschatalogical concepts contained in this statement. When the gathering of Israel and the restoration of the Ten Tribes has been completed, the Mormons believe that Christ will return to earth to establish his millennial kingdom over which he will reign personally. The millennium will be characterized by two resurrections; one at the beginning and one at the end. The first resurrection will see the dead who were believers raised to immortality. Also included in this resurrection will be non-believers who were searching for truth, but who did not hear the gospel.[31] Throughout the entire millennium

30. Elder John Morgan, The Plan of Salvation, page 31
31. See The Doctrine and Covenants, 45:54, page 72

the spirits of the wicked will remain in the "prison-house" of the spirit world where they will be given the opportunity to repent and be made worthy by their sufferings.

During the millennium the principal work towards which all mortal Mormons will direct their energies will be the temple work; i.e. baptism for the dead. Those living upon earth will have the opportunity to be baptized for all who have lived from the beginning of man's history. In this work they will be guided by those saints who have been resurrected and by Christ himself. In a footnote to the chapter on Mormonism in his book, "The Four Major Cults," Anthony Hoekema reports that the Genealogical Society prepared for this millennial temple work by microfilming records in thirteen countries during 1962. These microfilm records were equivalent to 154,174 printed volumes of approximately 300 pages each![32]

Those regarded as "the wicked" will not be on the earth during the millennium, but many non-Mormons who have lived "worthy lives", and who were therefore not condemned upon Christ's return, will participate in the events of the millennium. The gospel will be preached to them until they are either converted or die. At the second resurrection all the wicked will be raised. Satan, whose power has been completely restricted throughout the millennium, will be released. Those who do not accept the salvation offered by the Mormon faith and who follow Satan will become the Sons of Perdition. A final great battle will be waged in which Satan and his followers will be vanquished.

32. Op. cit., page 70

Following the last great battle with Satan and the renewal of the earth, man will exist in his final condition - a deathless state. Mormon doctrine asserts that men will be assigned to four distinct groups within this final state. The first of these groups, or perhaps we should say the last, will be the above-mentioned Sons of Perdition. This group will include Satan and his angels and all humans whose sins have made their repentance and salvation impossible. Such persons will be those who knew God in their mortal existence and who completely understood his purposes, but who wilfully rebelled against him. They are counted to be a small portion of the human race by the Mormons, but they will be permanently doomed to hell where their torment will be endless.[33] They are the only group which will not know redemption in one form or another. Those who are redeemed will pass eternity in one of the three aforementioned kingdoms. Each of these is a different kingdom and in itself contains many gradations or degrees of glory. Briefly, the three are as follows:

(a) The Celestial Kingdom - this kingdom is the highest of the three and will be located upon earth after its renewal. Its inhabitants will be those who have been cleansed of all sin and who have been judged to be most worthy by their strict adherence to the commandments of Christ. These persons will live in the presence of God and Christ forever.[34] They will also live with the mates to whom they have been sealed in marriage for eternity and with their children to whom they have also been sealed. The tenants of this Celestial Kingdom will continue to

33. See The Doctrine and Covenants, 76:33, 34, 44 & 45, page 123
34. Doctrine and Covenants, 76:62, page 124 76:71-80, page 125

produce offspring ("spirit children"), which privilege will be denied those who inherit the two lesser kingdoms. The latter will live in a state of "single blessedness" rather than in family units.

(b) The Terrestrial Kingdom - this kingdom will likely be located on some other planet. Its inhabitants will include the following: those who die without the law; those who rejected the gospel in this life but who accepted it in the afterlife; honorable men who were "blinded by the craftiness of men" and who did not, therefore, accept and live by the gospel; members of the Mormon Church who were half-hearted in their devotion to the Church and to the proclamation of the gospel.[35] All who enter this kingdom will "receive the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father."[36]

(c) The Telestial Kingdom - this kingdom will be located upon yet another planet. Here will be found those who lived unclean lives, who would not receive the gospel of Christ and who were condemned to hell to "suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fullness of t times."[37] Such persons, having been given opportunity to repent and believe in Christ, did so and thereby were raised at the end of the mi millennium. This group of people will be the most numerous by far. According to The Doctrine and Covenants: "These are they who receive not of his fulness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial."[38] And further: "And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ

35. Ibid., 76:71-80, page 125
36. Ibid., 76:77, page 125
37. Ibid., 76:106, page 126
38. Ibid., 76:86, page 125

dwell they cannot come, worlds without end."[39] Mormons believe that the opportunity for progression or advancement within each of these kingdoms will be granted, but that progression or advancement from one kingdom to another will not be possible.

(c) Mission - whose responsibility?

Having now discussed the authority whereby the Mormon Church undertakes its mission work, and having briefly discussed the hope the church places in these endeavors, it remains for us to ask whose responsibility it is to carry out the actual mission program. In its simplest form, the answer to this question is that "All eligible and worthy adult members of the Mormon Church are possible candidates for missionary work and may be called as part-time or full-time missionary workers."[40] Part-time missionaries work in local areas close to their own homes. Full-time missionaries work in the "field" most of the time. The duration of a missionary's term varies somewhat, as will be explained at a later point, but generally it averages two years wherever English is spoken, and two and a half years where knowledge of a foreign language is required. When a mission is completed, the missionary returns to his or her regular occupation and others are engaged to carry on the missionary work. However, the mission cause still remains the responsibility of every member of the church. There follow some of the specific words of instruction, reported by Joseph Smith, which place an unmistakable responsibility for mission upon members of the Church:

39. Ibid., 76:112, page 127
40. Rulon S. Howells, The Mormon Story, page 116

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days." 41

"Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.
Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.
He that seeketh me early shall find me, and shall not be forsaken." 42

The Church which undertakes such a mission program and which places the responsibility for that program on all its members has undertaken an ambitious program indeed! Not all Mormons respond to this challenge, but it is still safe to say that the Mormon Church involves a much larger proportion of its people in mission activity of one kind or another than most, if not all, other churches. Without question this is the greatest strength of Mormonism. Realizing the danger inherent in sweeping statements and generalizations the writer is, nevertheless, convinced that the appeal and growth of the Mormon Church may be explained by one word - involvement! Such involvement of its people, and those it would win to its cause, demands of the Mormon Church a most comprehensive and well-planned program of preparation for mission, and it is that training program to which we now turn.

41. The Doctrine and Covenants 1:4, page 1

42. Ibid., 88: 81, 82, 83, page 150

Chapter III

PREPARATION FOR MISSION

(a) The Priesthood

When a Mormon boy reaches the age of adolescence he embarks upon the most important stage of his training for mission. The reader will note that we most often refer to male Mormon youngsters in this chapter. This is no mistake, for by far the largest proportion of Mormon missionaries are young men; boys alone enter into the quorums of the Priesthood. We shall make further comment about the place of females in the mission structure of the church at a later point.

At the age of twelve all boys deemed to be worthy are eligible for ordination and induction into the priesthood organizations. The Mormon Church takes pride in the fact that it has no professional clergy as such, but that all members of the priesthood are charged with the responsibility of performing ministerial functions.

> The missionary system employed in the Church probably has no counterpart outside the areas where our people live. We have no professional clergy, as other churches do, for all bearing the priesthood are charged with ministerial responsibilities. 1

The greater part of the training required by a Mormon missionary is received in the various levels or quorums of the Priesthood. Because of the training received there the youngster is enabled to take an increasingly larger part in the various functions of the church. Even in his academic training he is given the opportunity, by attendance at church schools or seminaries, to learn the theology of his church and how to expound its gospel.

1. Stephen L. Richards, Missionaries, Truth Held Vital to World Today, page 14

Entry into the Priesthood is no doubt the most important step in a young boy's life. Within the quorums of the Priesthood he is made to feel that he has a vital and a God-given role to fill. He is helped to understand that it is a great honor and responsibility to be part of the youth leadership of his church. Richards describes the importance attached to this step in a boy's life with the following words:

> He is taught the history of the Priesthood, and he is made to understand that the power conferred upon him, even though a mere youth, derives from the authentic power given by the Lord Jesus Christ through his servants to those selected to receive the Priesthood in this dispensation of time, and from whom it has come in direct and authentic succession to this boy. He has respect for this calling, and he seeks to discharge his duties as a youthful holder of the Priesthood of the Lord. 2

It is to a discussion of the training received in the quorums of the Priesthood that we now turn.

The Aaronic Priesthood

We have already mentioned that all worthy Mormon boys are eligible to become members of the Aaronic Priesthood at the age of twelve. Within this Priesthood they are ordained to three different offices as they grow older. A brief description of each of these offices or divisions follows:

(1) Deacons - boys twelve and thirteen years of age. Within this division of the Priesthood boys receive religious instruction in all phases of their faith and also receive training as assistants to the Bishop. They are responsible for passing the sacraments at the Sunday School and Sacrament Meetings and are expected to preach. In some respects, they could be likened to Altar boys in the Roman Catholic

2. Op. cit., page 113

and Anglican Churches. (The Mormon dislike of ritual and ceremonial worship would no doubt cause them to throw up their hands in horror at this analogy!)

(2) Teachers - boys fourteen and fifteen years of age. Teachers, like Deacons, are ordained to their office. Their responsibilities include the preparation of the "emblems" of the sacrament, ushering at Sacrament Meetings and family teaching. In this latter responsibility they serve what could almost be termed an apprenticeship. By a deliberate training program they are given instruction which prepares them for the future when they will engage in mission work and meet with people in their homes to instruct them in the beliefs of Mormonism. The teachers are also expected to preach when called upon.

> But neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the sacrament, or lay on hands; they are, however, to warn, expound, exhort and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ. 3

(3) Priests - boys sixteen to eighteen years of age. Priests are also ordained to their office. They are charged with the responsibility of blessing the "emblems" of the sacraments. They are authorized to baptize and to ordain other members of the Aaronic Priesthood. Within this division of the Priesthood preaching becomes more important and is more doctrinal in nature. Priests may also serve as companions and assistants to missionaries who belong to a higher order of the Priesthood.

3. Doctrine and Covenants 20: 58-59, page 33

> Therefore, take with you those who are ordained unto the lesser priesthood, and send them before you to make appointments, and to prepare the way, and to fill appointments that you yourselves are not able to fill. Behold, this is the way that mine apostles, in ancient days, built up my church unto me. 4

Priests also participate in "cottage meetings" where co-educational programs are carried out and girls receive an important part of their religious instruction. Much of the teaching at "cottage meetings" is directed to fellow-Priests as a training method which prepares the boys for future mission work. Another of the duties of the Priests is to undertake a scripture memorization and reading program. The memorization of scripture figures very prominently in the presentation missionaries make when seeking converts.

Another function of the Aaronic Priesthood is that of its participation in the youth missionary program of the church. By a process known as "fellowshipping" the boys of the Aaronic Priesthood, and girls of the same age group, are encouraged to assume responsibility for interesting non-Mormon friends, acquaintances, schoolmates and others in the recreational, educational and cultural programs of their Church. In this way it is hoped they will be successful in bringing such people into membership in the church. This program can certainly be seen to comply with the philosophy that every member is a missionary.

Before going on to a consideration of the higher order of the Priesthood perhaps a word should be added here about two other matters. The first of these has to do with the supervision and guidance of the missionary outreach made by members of the Aaronic Priesthood, and girls in similar age brackets. As delineated in the Handbook for Stake Missions, the Bishopric of a ward presides over the Aaronic Priesthood

4. Doctrine and Covenants 84: 107-108, page 141

and is also responsible for the girls of that ward in the corresponding age groupings.[5] All the missionary outreach of these boys and girls comes under their supervision. In each ward or branch[6] an Aaronic Priesthood Missionary Committee is organized which is supervised by the ward bishopric or branch presidency. The bishop or branch president serves as chairman and the committee includes a representative of the Priest's quorum, the president or a representative of the Teacher's quorum, the president or a representative of each of the Deacon's quorums, and three girls corresponding in age with each quorum of the Aaronic Priesthood. The latter are selected to be members of this Missionary Committee.

The Aaronic Priesthood Missionary Committee, under the direction of the bishop, meets frequently enough to give needed guidance to the missionary activities of the church's young people. It is expected that the auxiliary organizations described later in this chapter will prove attractive to young people who are non-members and who are brought to such meetings by Mormon friends, missionaries and others. In particular, the Mutual Improvement Association is expected to present social and recreational programs under the guidance of the Missionary Committee to which members will invite non-member youth. In the event that a need is felt for some special or unique activity in the community, the bishop may ask the Mutual Improvement Association to sponsor such a special project. It is the aim of all such programs,

5. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Handbook For Stake Missions, page 17 ff.
6. Briefly speaking, a branch is a ward in its formative stage. When, by virtue of numerical strength, leadership potential, training of members, etc., it becomes strong enough, it is then called a ward.

presented through these auxiliary organizations, to create an interest in non-members in the teachings and programs of the church.

A brief word should be added here about male members of the Mormon Church who come into membership as adults. How do such persons find a place in the Priesthood? The Priesthood, it must be understood, is intended for all male members of the church and not just those who have had the opportunity to participate in its training programs during adolescence. However, all must be deemed worthy of ordination before they may receive such an honor. Therefore, a Senior Aaronic Priesthood organization exists to which are invited all adult males who have just joined the church. Faithful attendance at its meetings and proof that one is "living the gospel" will result in the ordination of these adult converts to the various grades or levels within the Aaronic Priesthood. So it is that such persons, as well as the younger members, may look forward to the time when they will be received into the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood.

The highest office in the Aaronic Priesthood is the office of the bishop, which post must be filled by a member of the High Priest's quorum of the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. The bishop is assisted by two counsellors who must also be High Priests. The typical Mormon executive body is organized in like fashion and is composed of a head, or chief, and two assistants. The bishop in this case holds local authority only and is the administrative head of the ward. He is, in fact, a sort of "unpaid pastor" who is chosen by the First Presidency of the church in consulation with the stake presidency and council. There are really two orders of bishops in the church - the local or ward bishops which have just been mentioned, and the general bishops.

The order of general bishops includes the Presiding Bishop, who is in authority over all bishops and all the Aaronic Priesthood quorums or councils in the church.

The Melchizedek Priesthood

As in the Aaronic Priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood is characterized by three ranks or quorums. However, the offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood differ in that they are designated by function rather than as groupings designed mainly for training purposes. When a young man enters the Melchizedek Priesthood he is eligible to serve as a Missionary. There follows a brief description of each of the three divisons:

(1) Elders - at the age of 19 young men are ordained to the higher priesthood and become Elders. Those who have reached the Eldership have attained full adult status in the Church and are, by this ordination, held to possess the spiritual powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood, a body capable of, and charged with, administering divine ordinances on earth. The powers granted the Elders must, however, be exercised only within the proper organizational setting. Therefore, the function of this priesthood is carried out within the organizational structure of the church and is subject to the discipline of the church. A full quorum consists of ninety-six members and is presided over by a president and two counselors, who are also Elders and members of the same quorum. As mentioned above, it is after ordination to this division of the Priesthood that members are called upon to be missionaries.

(2) Seventies - members of this quorum are ordained and dedicated in a special way to the Missionary work of their church.

> The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world - thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. 7

Seventies work under the direction of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and most of them are ordained to this office after they have been called by the First Presidency of the Church to go on a mission. As most missions are two years in duration, the members of this quorum are usually around twenty-one years of age. In effect, they become what might be termed "minute men" for they may be called to go on a "Stake" or "Foreign" mission at any time. (The differences in these two types of missions will be discussed in the next chapter.) The quorums of the Seventies are composed of seventy members and are supervised by seven presidents, each of whom is meant to have equal authority with the others. The senior president presides over all meetings and while the other two quorums of the Melchizedek Priesthood function on a Stake level, the Seventies function on a church-wide level. Since this is the group specifically charged with major responsibility for mission work, we shall be turning our attention more directly to them in the sections which are to follow.

(3) High Priests - ordination to this top level of the Priesthood means ordination to an administrative office. The members of this quorum hold most of the leading offices in the church. The First President and his two counsellors, the Council of the Twelve Apostles,

7. Doctrine and Covenants 107: 25, page 193

all bishops and stake presidents are members of the High Priests' quorum. Mission presidents and the seven presidents of the Seventies are not required to be High Priests.

The table included on the next page will give the reader a somewhat more concise picture of the structure of both the Priesthood and the auxiliary organizations found within a typical Mormon ward.[8] It is worth nothing that over half the adult members of a ward hold responsible positions in the ward organizations. The total membership of each ward is allowed to participate in one or more of the organizations shown in the table, and it is a consideration of these auxiliary organizations to which we now turn.

(b) Religious education in the auxiliary organizations of the church.

In addition to the Priesthood divisions which have been discussed, the Mormon Church also operates several auxiliary organizations which come under the direction of the Priesthood. These are designed to serve the spiritual, physical and social needs of the various age groups for which they are intended. A perceptive member of the Christian Church will tell you that his religious education began in his home the moment he was old enough to comprehend what was going on around him. So it is with the training of Mormon missionaries. If we are to understand "mission training" as anything which prepares and equips the individual to make a witness to what he believes and stands for, then we must not overlook any formative influences, even the unstructured ones.

8. Rulon S. Howells, The Mormon Story, page 102

Priesthood Quorums and Auxiliary Organizations of a Typical Mormon Ward

Over one-half of the total adult membership of each "Ward" or local group hold responsible and active positions in its organizations.

The entire membership of each "Ward" or group may participate in one or more of the following organizations, which meet regularly as shown below.

ORGANIZATIONS and MEETINGS			FUNCTIONS
Priesthood Quorums (Ordained male members, usually meet each Sunday morning)			
Division of Priesthood	Approx. Ages in Years	Number in Each Group	
Aaronic			These groups have the responsibility to direct all Church activities in their respective callings. In their group activities they study all phases of religion; have group recreation, welfare and relief work. Each Mormon family is visited briefly each month by "Ward Teachers" selected from these groups.
Deacons	12-14	12	
Teachers	15-17	24	
Priests	17-19	48	
Melchizedek			
Elders	19 & over	96	
Seventies	21 & over	70	
High Priests	21 & over	Indefinite number	
Sacrament Meeting Attended by all ages, both male and female. Regular meeting held once each Sunday afternoon or evening			This is the main religious service for the entire membership of the Church. All partake of the Sacrament (bread and water) at this meeting.
Sunday School Attended by all ages, both male and female. Regular meeting held once each Sunday morning.			Divided into age group classes. Members study all phases of religion. All partake of Sacrament (bread and water) at this meeting.
Relief Society Attended by women only. Ages from 18 years and over. Regular meetings weekly on a weekday.			Study all phases of religion. In pairs they visit all members in their homes. Welfare work and care for needy and sick.
Mutual Improvement Associations Attended by both male and femole over 12 years of age. Regular meeting each week. (weekday evening)			Study a variety of subjects. Special development of talents, drama, speech, etc. Recreation and dancing.
Primary Association For children up to 12 years of age. Regular meeting weekday. (daytime)			Study character and religious subjects. Recreation and play.

All leaders and teachers of the above organizations are volunteer non-paid workers (usually trained in some profession or trade at which they work during the day to sustain themselves)

Note: A recent adjustment in the age groupings of the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood has resulted in the following divisions:

Deacons - 12 to 13 years
Teachers - 14 to 15 years
Priests - 16 to 18 years

The majority of Mormon missionaries are raised by parents who are themselves involved in the work of the church. Missionaries' fathers are usually members of the Priesthood. So it is that prayer, scripture reading and religious instruction are a natural part of their early life. Not only do they see the older members of their families engaging in such activities, they participate themselves. Supported by the influence of the home, the child finds himself involved at an early age in the religious education program of his church. There, in Sunday School and various youth programs, he learns the literature of his church. In all such youth programs a concerted effort is made to blend formal religious instruction with recreation and social activity. Stephen L. Richards has described this process with these words used by permission by Benjamin Alward:

> ....he is integrated into a spiritual Society. His recreation, which not infrequently brings the contacts which enable him to choose his life's partner, is supervised and directed under religious auspices, whose constant endeavor is to clarify and define the ultimate goals of life. In the atmosphere of such spirituality, his spirit nature is nurtured and developed. His liberal participation in all such institutions and exercises is calculated for the development of that spirituality. 9

Let us then take a quick look at some of the auxiliary organizations of the Mormon Church in an attempt to ascertain how their programing contributes to the general preparation of young people for mission work in later life. We shall start with the organization designated for the youngest age group.

9. Benjamin Alward, A Look At Mormonism, page 113

The Primary Association

The Primary Association provides regular weekday meetings for children from three to twelve years of age. Mormons believe that the training of children is all important, so the teaching and training received in the home and Sunday School are supplemented by this weekday program of instruction and activity. Immediately after school the children gather for what is described as "intensive religious, social, and recreational training and experience."[10] Through this program the attempt is made not only to instruct but also to mould and shape the character, while instilling in young minds the desire to testify to the gospel as they have received it. Activities include such things as singing, playing games, memory work, handicrafts, listening to stories, etc. The children also learn concern for others by contributing money to the Primary Children's Hospital which is located in Salt Lake City, Utah, and which specializes in medical care of the young. The Primary Association also administers the Cub Scout program in the Mormon Church, a program which is widespread and enthusiastically received.

The Mutual Improvement Associations

The Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations were organized in the church during the presidency of Brigham Young. The program of the MIA is one designed to encourage spiritual growth and offer opportunities for service. Activities are organized to meet the social, recreational and religious needs of the adolescents within

10. Doyle L. Green and Randall L. Green, Meet The Mormons, page 100

its ranks. The motto of the MIA is "The Glory of God Is Intelligence". One evening a week the young people involved gather for an opening assembly, which may feature short talks, skits, debates and musical numbers. Following these activities the young people go into departmental sessions which are arranged according to age. Each department has a course of study which is geared to fulfill the purposes of the MIA. All such meetings are opened and adjourned with prayer and a hymn. Most of the Mormon Stake houses or chapels have adjoining recreation halls or gymnasiums and a great deal of effort is put forth to keep the young people organized and actively engaged in what the Mormons feel to be wholesome pursuits. There are six general areas of activity: dancing, drama, music, speech and boys' and girls' athletics. The program also incorporates the Boy Scouts Movement and one of the biggest recreational and athletic activities is a basketball league which the Mormons claim is the largest in the world.

The Sunday School

The Sunday School Union is the largest and most important of all the auxiliary organizations and conducts an educational program throughout the church for the theological and religious training of every member, and any others who wish to attend. It is attended by people of all ages, both male and female, and meets once a week on Sunday morning. Pupils are divided into classes by age. As Benjamin Alward says: "It is the aim of the Sunday School to organize, inform, motivate, and train to help create faith, devotion, character, leadership and spirituality in Sunday School students."[11] One unique

11. Alward, A Look At Mormonism, page 77

characteristic of the Mormon Sunday School is the short talks given by two young pupils before the whole congregation each week. In this way Mormon youngsters gain experience in public speaking well before this usually happens in other churches. As of December, 1965, the Mormon Church reported a total of 170,279 Sunday Schools in operation throughout the church.[12]

The Relief Society

The Women's Relief Society is next in importance to the Sunday School, if, indeed, not more important. It is through this auxiliary organization that the women of the church (18 years and up) are given opportunity for service. In fact, the Relief Society has provided the equivalent, for the women of the church, of the priesthood activities and responsibilities for men. The Society has been in existence since the earliest days of the church, being organized on March 17, 1842. Since that time it has evoked the support of large numbers of Mormon women. Such things as relief of the poor, sick and other unfortunates, maternal and child welfare classes, and supporting the Church Welfare Plan (to be described at a later point) have been amongst its activities. The Society has no written constitution or by-laws, but works instead under the direction of the priesthood and follows its own precedents. In a church which is largely male-oriented, the importance of this organization may not be over-emphasized. Female Mormon Church members have, in some instances, been regarded as "second class citizens."

12. 136th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - Report - see pages 6 to 9

"Teaching visits" are a unique feature of Relief Society activity. Pairs of teachers are charged with the responsibility of making monthly visits to the church families in their assigned districts. During such visits they are expected to give an inspirational message and observe any cases of need. Before the visits are made the message which is to be delivered is presented and discussed at a meeting of the visiting teachers. Reports of previous visits are also made at this meeting and cases of need are reported directly to the president of the local Society so that they may be acted upon. Benjamin Alward describes the activity of the Relief Society as follows:

> Through its diversified program of education, homemaking, and religious instruction, the Society endeavors to manifest benevolence, irrespective of creed or nationality; to care for the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate; to minister where death reigns; to assist in correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of community life; to raise human life to its highest level; to elevate and enlarge the scope of women's activities and conditions; to foster love for religion, education, culture, and refinement; to develop faith, to save souls, to study and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The greatest objective of the Relief Society is, of course, to increase the faith of its members. 13

Before leaving our consideration of the auxiliary organizations of the church and their relationship to Missionary work, we must say a word about the Department of Education which the church maintains. Although it may not necessarily be described as an auxiliary organization, it does, nonetheless, play an important role in providing Mormon young people with an understanding of their faith. It thereby equips them to be more effective witnesses to what they profess. The Department of Education directs the work of the various institutes and seminaries which the church erects and maintains near high schools,

13. Op cit., page 73

junior colleges, colleges and universities. These institutes and seminaries may easily be seen as the church's attempt to meet what to it is the "threat of secular education." The buildings and facilities maintained for this purpose often represent a tremendous outlay of money. An example of such expensive activity is the Institute of Religion in Salt Lake City. High schools in Utah are allowed to give credit for Bible courses taken in the seminaries and the Church maintains Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah, as well as a business college at Salt Lake City. All such institutions make an important contribution to the religious education of Mormon youth, and thus warrant inclusion in any consideration of those forces which help to shape the face of Mormon mission.

(c) How missionaries are selected and recommended.

As we give consideration to how Mormon missionaries are selected and recommended for service it must be remembered that there are two major categories of mission work. In part, it will be the purpose of chapter three of this thesis to define the differences between these two categories in more detail. However, putting it as simply as possible for now, the two categories are full-time mission work and part-time mission work. We shall deal with the recommendation and selection of missionaries for work in each of these fields in turn.

(1) Full-time missions:

In the General Church Handbook, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the following is included in an explanation of how missionaries are to be recommended:

It is the responsibility of the bishop of a ward and the president of a branch to prepare the young people in the ward or branch for missionary service. The importance of proper preparation and worthiness for a mission should be impressed upon all when interviewed for baptism and when young men are interviewed preparatory to their being ordained deacons, and again when they are to be ordained teachers and priests. Every boy should be converted to the importance of filling a mission, and of living in such a way as to be worthy to go. When the young man reaches the proper age to be called on a mission he should be interviewed again and encouraged and helped to arrange to go. Each of these various interviews offers an excellent opportunity also for the bishop to visit the family of the boy, explaining his intention of recommending to the First Presidency that the young man be called for missionary service when he reaches the appropriate age if he is worthy. 14

The ward bishop knows that it is not only his duty but his right to initiate such steps as will lead to the recommendation of a candidate for missionary work. He is provided with the appropriate "Missionary Recommendation" forms which he may complete only after a very thorough interview with each candidate. He is guided in his job of interviewing by a set of instructions which are printed on the back of each recommendation form. The same form is used for both young people and older candidates who are to be recommended.

Once his own personal interview has been concluded the bishop makes arrangements for the candidate to meet with the stake president. He provides the president with the confidential recommendation form which he has completed on the basis of his own interview. The stake president must then carefully interview the candidate privately. Both the bishop and the stake president must satisfy themselves that the proposed missionary is worthy, capable, healthy and able to render good service, otherwise he should not be recommended to the First Presidency. Should the candidate be deemed satisfactory following

14. General Church Handbook, pages 31 and 32

these two interviews, his application is submitted for his call to missionary work. A thorough medical examination, carried out by a competent physician, is also required before a candidate may be recommended. A medical examination form is supplied the doctor by the Missionary Department and this form, signed by the physician, must be included with the forms submitted by the bishop. Thus we see that

> The bishop and the stake president are charged with the sacred duty of thoroughly examining the prospective missionary as to his worthiness, physical capacity, and his capability and desire to go on a mission, as well as his willingness to comply fully with the standards of the Church and the rules and regulations of the missions. Only those who are worthy and will thus dedicate themselves for the term of their mission should be approved and recommended. 15

If, for some reason, the bishop or stake president is not available to conduct such inquiries of missionary candidates, the first counselor to such officers may carry out the interview in his behalf. In the absence of the first counselor, this work may also be done by the second counselor. No doubt the most important requirement on the part of the prospective missionary is his own personal motivation to serve as a missionary and his readiness to go where he is sent by the church. In this regard, it is easy to see how important it is that stake presidents and bishops do an effective job of encouraging parents to inspire in their sons the desire to offer themselves for missionary work. Other opportunities also present themselves for the encouragement of missionary fervor in youngsters, and bishops must be well aware of the responsibility and opportunity they have through such channels as the Aaronic Priesthood classes. Other officers, teachers and leaders in the various auxiliary organizations are also expected to

15. Ibid.., pages 32 and 33

cooperate by impressing upon each young man the importance of becoming a missionary and the importance of conducting himself so that he will be worthy of such recommendation.

In order that we may better understand the type of inquiry which is made into those matters pertaining to the worthiness and qualification of each candidate, there follows an extended reference to the General Church Handbook. This material indicates why specific inquiry is made in each of the following areas:

1. Physical fitness. Disability in the mission field is expensive, embarrassing, and also always results in injustice to the missionary, his companion, the missionary work, and the Church. Any physical weaknesses or impairments are almost always accentuated by the extensive walking, irregular living conditions, excitement and unusual mental and physical strain that accompany missionary living. Those who are not in the best physical condition should be used in the stake missions and not be recommended for the full-time missions.

2. Moral Fitness. It is very important that bishops and stake presidents follow the same basic principles in passing upon the moral worthiness of a young man or woman to receive a call from the First Presidency to go on a full-term mission away from home.

   Prospective missionaries must be asked specifically if they are virtuous, morally clean, and free from any form of moral or sex transgression, or other impure or improper practice, law breaking, or other irregularities.

   Bishops and stake presidents must satisfy themselves thoroughly before recommending men or women for mission calls, that they are morally clean, that is to say, that they have not been guilty at any time of fornication or comparable offenses.

   Conferences between General Authorities, stake presidents and bishops are in order when deemed necessary in instances where there is serious question about an individual under consideration. Such collaboration should be had before recommending or rejecting the applicant.

   Strict adherence to this rule is imperative. There must be no departure from the stipulations made herein, and no discrimination nor partiality shown.

In all cases the seriousness of transgression in the mission field, with its inevitable punishment of excommunication, should be brought to the attention of all candidates interviewed.

Neither the bishop, the stake president, the missionary nor his family, should announce the consideration of a mission until after the call from the First Presidency has actually been received. This might save embarrassment to the missionary, his family and all concerned.

Any individuals who do not qualify for full term missions in the above respect, but who have demonstrated through a reasonable period of time their total repentance and who are otherwise worthy, may be called into stake missionary service.

There is of course, generally speaking, less temptation within the stake, and in addition there is the benefit of home environment which will further strengthen the individual. This is a means of giving those who desire to do missionary work, but who cannot be called on full-time missions, an opportunity to serve.

Any bishop or stake president who feels that a given case justifies special consideration because of his belief that true repentance has been shown over an adequate period of time, may confer with a member of the Council of the Twelve, Assistants to the Twelve or First Council of Seventy, who alone have the sole right to consider and determine any deviation from or exception to this rule.

3. Mental Fitness. Only those who can read and write and with normal mental abilities should be recommended. They should have sufficient ability to meet the normal requirements of missionary work.

4. Spiritual Fitness. Only those who sustain the priesthood authority, general and local, and who evidence faith and true conversion to gospel principles should be recommended.

5. Financial Status. Only those who can support themselves, or be supported by relatives or friends, in whole or in part or who have assurance of support from a priesthood quorum or other Church organization, or otherwise, should be recommended. It is desirable to have the individual support himself so far as possible, then the family should augment the missionary's funds. Where quorums or other agencies assist a missionary, they should merely augment the efforts of the family and should not take over full support of the missionary.

6. Desire to serve. A sincere desire to do missionary work is one of the most important qualifications of a prospective missionary. Unwilling persons do not make good missionaries. Bishops should make certain, independent of the family, that the individual himself desires to go on a mission before he recommends him for a call. 16

Generally speaking, these are the qualifications which must be met before a young man is worthy of recommendation for a call to serve on a mission. However, there are certain other requirements and restrictions which have to do with special cases involving other than single young men. For example, mature married couples may also be called upon to serve as missionaries, as long as they meet the medical requirements of good health, do not leave behind any unmarried children and are able to care for themselves financially. The latter requirement may include the purchase and operation of a car while on the mission. Married couples must also be willing to go wherever they are sent and must readily accept from the mission president whatever task he assigns them. Such couples who go on short term missions are expected to pay for their own transportation to and from the mission field.

Those who are experiencing marital difficulties, or those who have been divorced may be recommended for mission work, but only after their fitness to serve has been inquired into with great care. In the case of divorcees, their position must be cleared in advance by the First Presidency. Young men who have only recently been married are not eligible for full-time mission service, but may serve as part-time missionaries. Young couples capable of raising families are not to be recommended for mission work, nor are wives to be sent out to join their husbands in the final stages of their missions. Finally,

16. Ibid., pages 33 to 35

no person is to be recommended for mission work whose going would mean leaving small or dependent children in the hands of someone other than their father or mother. Nor are those who have accumulated heavy debts and have made no definite arrangements to meet the same.

(2) Part-time missions:

The council of the Seventies quorum within a stake is responsible to recommend to the stake presidency members of its own quorum for part-time or stake missionary work. The names of such members, along with other recommendations from bishops, high councilors, or other priesthood leaders, are given careful consideration. As in the case of full-time mission candidates, proper clearance from the bishop is required to insure the proposed missionary's worthiness. Once clearance is granted the stake president also interviews the prospective part-time missionary. The prospective missionary must be completely convinced himself of the importance of his call and must be ready to give the required time to dedicated service. The Handbook For Stake Missions says the following in a section entitled "Who May Serve As Missionaries?":

> A small group of well-trained, personable, alert brethren, with their wives in some cases, will be called as stake missionaries. Other sisters may be called at the discretion of the stake president.
>
> Inasmuch as major responsibility for stake missionary work is to rest upon the Seventies quorum, or quorums, as many as possible of the stake missionaries should be called from among the Seventies.
>
> Missionaries called should be selected on the basis of worthiness to represent the Church, ability to learn and present the missionary lessons, and aptitude in meeting people and explaining and teaching the Gospel. Stake missionaries should be worthy and of good repute in their communities and consistently faithful to the Church and its teachings.

Women with small children should not be called as missionaries. 17

One question may be raised concerning what constitutes a "small group of well-trained, etc.....brethren." Apparently only a sufficient number of stake missionaries needed to teach the available investigators are supposed to be called at any one time. The size of this stake or part-time missionary force is to be determined by the stake presidency, taking into account such factors as stake population, the non-member population within the stake boundaries and the availability of good missionary candidates. Following his recommendation and the reception of his call to be a missionary, the candidate is assigned to the stake mission presidency which administers a training course planned by the stake mission. It is to such training programs that we now turn.

(d) Specialized training for mission

Strictly speaking the only theological training a Mormon missionary receives is what he learns in Sunday School, in the seminaries adjacent to the high school he attends, or perhaps in religious courses offered by a Mormon-operated college. Just before leaving to go on his mission the missionary attends a short course, of about two weeks duration, at Salt Lake City, Utah. Throughout his term as a missionary he is considered as an ordained minister and has authority to baptize, marry or conduct funerals. During the course given at the Mission Home in Salt Lake City, the missionary gets free room, but is expected to pay for his own meals. He receives a physical examination, tests and orientation programs and attends a number of lectures.

17. Handbook For Stake Missions, page 13

The life of a missionary is meant to be rather highly regulated by specific instructions. He is often admonished that he represents not only himself and his family, but the church as a whole and the Mormon Priesthood in particular. He is therefore reminded to avoid all contacts which would prevent him from remaining "unspotted from the sins of the world". In particular he is counseled to avoid all contacts with the opposite sex which might lead to immorality. Some basic rules govern his conduct in the presence of women. He may not be alone with a woman, should not call her by her first name and must not touch her except to shake hands. Such regulations would seem to preclude the possibility of dating while on a mission, which is exactly the case. However, should a young man find spare time weighing heavily on his hands, he is also admonished to keep up his studies!

Certain other instructions given during this training course warn him against saying, either in public or private, that he does not know the gospel is true, and against baptizing a married woman without her husband's consent, or children without their parents' consent. He is charged with the responsibility of keeping careful records of the ordinances he may confer, that is, baptisms, confirmations, blessings and namings of children. Any reports he makes of healing or speaking in tongues must be authenticated by witnesses and sent to the mission president's office.

One final word should be included about clothing. Prior to their call all prospective missionaries are informed by their bishops that they will be expected to wear modest and conservative clothing while on their mission. Special instructions regarding proper clothing are

sent out with the missionary calls. Upon request the Church mission secretary at Salt Lake City will supply information regarding the availability of such attire, costs, and other required information. That such a policy is adhered to will easily be verified by anyone who has lived in a Mormon area, for it is quite easy to identify Mormon missionaries at a distance by appearance alone.

Chapter IV

HOW MISSIONARY WORK IS CARRIED OUT

(a) Organizational structure of the Mormon Church

Before proceeding to a consideration of the program followed by missionaries in carrying out the work to which they are assigned, it may be of some help if a brief description of the organizational structure of the church is included.[1] Throughout the preceeding chapter considerable reference has been made to various officers and councils or committees which function at different levels in the church structure. It will be of value for the reader to see the relationship of each of these to the others and to understand something of the "chain of command", or line of authority and jurisdiction which runs throughout. A chart which depicts basic church organization has been included here so that the structure might be somewhat more clearly defined.[2]

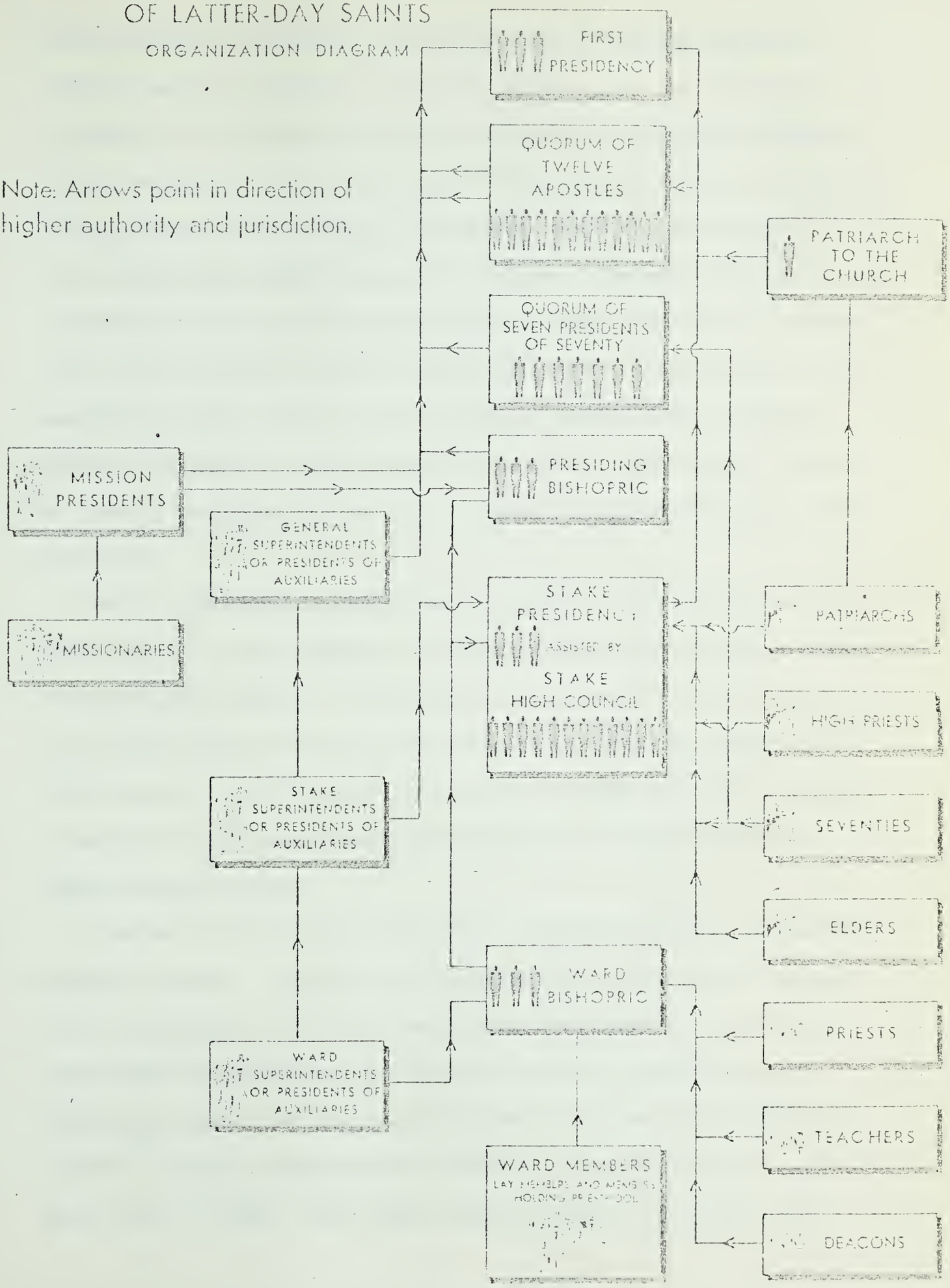
The line of authority in the Priesthood of the church runs from the top downward and responsibility from the lowest level up. All local, regional and church-wide activities and programs are conducted by this non-professional priesthood under the direction of the highest officials. The highest and most important office in the church is that of the President. This position has been occupied by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and the line of their successors, culminating in David O. McKay, the present head of the church.

1. A survey of The Doctrines and Covenants discloses the fact that the organization of the Mormon Church is largely outlined in this record of alleged revelations received by Joseph Smith. While such organization may have been somewhat altered and refined over the years, it remains essentially the same.
2. Green, Doyle & Randall, Meet The Mormons, page 79

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

ORGANIZATION DIAGRAM

Note: Arrows point in direction of higher authority and jurisdiction.



The president of the church is believed to be a divinely inspired prophet, seer and revelater of what the Mormons call the "restored dispensation." Of later years this revelation has been most undramatic and has bordered on being unofficial. The president is given assistance by two counselors and together they compose the First Presidency. It is the president who selects and appoints bishops. He may officiate in all the offices of the church and may be called upon, aided by his counsellors, to try difficult cases of church discipline. The president also appoints all other officers of the "General Authorities" or highest offices, although such appointments are subject to approval by vote of the general conference of the church which is held twice a year in Salt Lake City.

Next in importance to the First Presidency is the Council of the Twelve Apostles, whose members are believed to hold the restored office of the original apostles. The members of the Council are authorized to elect the President of the church and do so by choosing their own senior member. It is the duty of the Council members to act as a sort of executive high council which travels about the church handling administrative business.

The Patriarch of the church holds a somewhat different office than the other leaders. His office is hereditary, although his appointment must be sustained by a vote of the general conference, as is the case with other office bearers. His jurisdiction is a general one and extends throughout the church at large where he grants blessings and declares lineages, through which ancestry is supposedly traced back to the tribes of Israel. The latter pronouncements are believed to be

inspired by the Holy Spirit. Regional patriarchs in the church also discharge similar functions.

The First Council of the Seventy, composed of seven presidents, directs the work of the quorums of Seventies. It is a traveling high council with authority over missionary work and any other work which the First Presidency designates to it. When traveling to carry out such work, members of the First Council of the Seventy are regarded as the representatives of the First Presidency and Council of Twelve.

The Presiding Bishopric, the last of the General Authorities, is composed of the Presiding Bishop and two counselors and is in charge of the Aaronic Priesthood. It has authority over all church business which does not come directly under the control of the First Presidency. Traditionally, the job of the bishop has been to manage the temporal affairs of the church. Members of the Presiding Bishopric may only be appointed by the First Presidency.

Below these highest offices, or General Authorities, are the stake and ward organizations. These have previously been compared to the presbytery or diocese, and the congregation or parish respectively. The membership of a stake may vary from 2,000 to 10,000 members, with the average being somewhere in the middle. Presiding over the stake is a stake presidency composed of a president and two counselors, and a stake high council, which is an advisory body generally composed of twelve members. The stake president is chosen by the General Authorities of the church, or by the First Presidency, or the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The stake patriarch is also chosen and appointed by the First Presidency or by the Council of the Twelve.

All of the priesthood and auxiliary organizations have divisions at the stake level.

The stake is, of course, divided into wards, which are the basic units of church life for the Mormons. The ward may vary in size from approximately 200 to 1,800 people, although the most desirable size is considered to be about 750 members. The Mormon philosophy of active involvement in the life of the church causes them to look with disfavor on a ward which exceeds that size. When wards do become larger the danger of a percentage of the membership becoming nothing but observers is more real. Consequently, there is a constant process of ward subdivision going on within the church. This process of subdivision also occurs on the stake level. The number of wards within a stake generally varies from five to ten.

As previously mentioned, the ward has its full complement of quorums in the two orders of the Priesthood. These groups meet every week and the quorums of the Melchizedek Priesthood meet quarterly with their stake quorums also. The ward bishop, an unsalaried, part-time official, presides over the ward and with the help of two counselors supervises all the ward organizations. He alone has the authority to appoint the local church officials, although such appointments are made after careful consultation with and approval from the organizations concerned. These appointments are also subject to a sustaining vote by the membership of the ward. The ward bishops themselves are nominated to their positions by the stake presidency, which nominations are forwarded to the First Presidency for ratification.

Every member of the Mormon Church, including those in highest office, belongs to a ward organization and is subject in local affairs to the authority of the ward bishop. Wards are expected to keep records concerning their members. Such records are kept current on the basis of the monthly visits by ward teachers to each member-home. Once every five years a complete census is carried out and the results are sent to Salt Lake City. Record keeping of various kinds appears to be of great significance in the Mormon Church.

In areas where mission work is being carried on, both in North America and overseas, stake and ward organization is usually preceded by district and branch organization. A district is supervised by a president and his two counselors, as is the case with a branch. Usually these officers are missionaries serving their voluntary term. In the case of districts and branches, unlike stakes and wards, these officials do not have to be members of the High Priests' quorum. Districts and branches are part of a larger territorial organization known as "the Mission", which is also under the authority of a president and counselors. Generally speaking, this form of missionary activity continues until, by virtue of numerical strength, leadership potential, etc., the district becomes a stake. Usually this occurs when the membership reaches between two and four thousand persons. By virtue of the same process the branches become wards. Thus we have at least a basic description of what is no doubt one of the most disciplined and yet effective pieces of church organization and government in the world.

(b) Different types of mission work.

It has already been pointed out in a previous chapter of this thesis that there is more than one kind of missionary activity in the Mormon Church. However, it now remains for us to give a more detailed explanation of the different types of mission work which do prevail. We shall do this by giving consideration to three basic categories of missionary endeavor.

(1) Full-time Missionaries

Alvin R. Dyer, writing in his book The Challenge, describes the full-time missionary as one

> ....whose responsibility it is to go to that mission assigned by the prophet of the Lord and to devote his entire time, under the direction of his mission president, also assigned there by the prophet of the Lord, in preaching the gospel, until such time as he is released. He then returns to his home and as a member fits one of the other missionary categories. 3

We see from the above that full-time mission work is carried out by missionaries who do intensive work over a relatively short period of time. Full-time missionaries may be sent to any area in North America where Mormonism is weak, or to any other area in the world where Mormon mission activity is carried on. Generally speaking, missions carried on in other areas of the world are referred to as "Foreign Missions." As previously mentioned, the missionary spends approximately two years in service if he is working in an English speaking country, or approximately two and a half years if he is sent to a foreign language country. More recently, missionaries to foreign language countries are spending about three months of their time learning the local language.

3, Dyer, The Challenge, page 79

It should be noted that Mormon missionaries nearly always work among people who have already been exposed, at least to some degree, to the teachings of orthodox Christianity. It would be interesting to know just what percentage of Mormon converts could be classified as "fringe" or "nominal" members or adherents of various other churches. In any event, such mission activity has often laid Mormons open to the charge of "sheep stealing." However, it should be remembered that sincere Mormons simply believe they are building upon a foundation of previous belief in God, Jesus Christ, and the Bible which will bring the potential convert to a saving knowledge of the restoration of the "true" Church made known through Joseph Smith.

(2) Part-time or Stake Missionaries

To quote Dyer again, the part-time missionary is one

> ....whose reponsibility it is to perform a missionary labor with a stake mission, or some other specific location to which he may be assigned by this stake president, mission president or the church missionary committee. He shall devote all of his time, for a given period, to his missionary call except the time needed to make a living and care for the general needs of his family. This is to be done under the direction of those similarly appointed to this work. 4

In other words, the part-time or stake missionary continues at his normal occupation in his home community and carries on his missionary activities within the boundaries of his own stake during his off-work hours. Apparently he is expected to devote no rigidly set amount of time to mission work, and it is likely that this time varies according to individual circumstances. However, stake missionaries are expected to set aside much of their usual church and social activity during their term of service in order to devote the necessary time to

4. Ibid., page 79

missionary work. The usual term of service for a stake missionary is two to three years, but if necessary he may be called for an additional term. When his term is completed the missionary is given an official release, which indicates that he has successfully and satisfactorily completed his missionary assignment and is granted a sort of "honorable discharge." It is interesting to note that the Mormons have much less success in converting Gentiles who live in what are predominantly Mormon areas. Stake mission operations were really established in 1936 with the aim of reclaiming backsliding Mormons and converting Gentiles.

In the above two categories missionaries are always expected to work in pairs, that is, two men or two women missionaries, or a man and wife team. Calls to and releases from missionary work are not supposed to be made without giving proper consideration to the continuing need for properly matched teams of missionaries.

(3) Every member missionary work

It is important that we understand that missionary work does not end with the above two categories. Indeed, it may well be that the greatest missionary influence is exerted by those who are not engaged in so called formal mission activity at all. We turn to Dyer again who speaks about the member missionary and says that

> ....every member of the church comes under the challenge issued by our prophet and president. Many will have already filled either a full-time or part-time mission and will therefore add their experience to the work as they continue to support the missionary cause. 5

5. Ibid., page 79

He further suggests that there are several channels open to the member through which he may assist the church's missionary endeavor. Assistance may be given both full and part-time missionaries by arranging for either personal or "cottage meeting" contacts with potential converts. Members of the priesthood quorums, in particular the Seventies, and members of the Relief Society and other auxiliary organizations of the church may see that programs are developed in their organizations which will prove an attraction to non-members. Members involved in the various groups or classes of these organizations are encouraged to be on the lookout for opportunities to invite non-member friends, relatives or acquaintances to their various functions and activities. In this regard they are urged to work in cooperation with the full and part-time missionaries also. And finally, the member may aid and abet the missionary cause by the very example he sets in the community in which he lives. To quote Dyer once more:

> A Latter-day Saint family, or individual, exposed to neighbors or associates, who persistently lives in accordance with the standards of the gospel cannot fail to make a good impression upon honest and good people. This, in so many cases provides a direct line to the missionary and ultimate conversion to the Church of many converts. 6

There is really one other category of missionary which should at least be mentioned before we leave this topic. That is the Special Missionary, or missionary who is called to perform some specific and unique piece of mission work. Those who staff the Mormon building at the World's Fair, or the Information Bureaus outside Mormon Temples,

5. Ibid., page 79
6. Ibid., page 80

would fall into this category. Such persons are called to give service for a specific and limited period of time and may very likely be those who have already served on full or part-time missions. Whatever the category in which the member of the Mormon Church may find himself, he is ever mindful of the fact that Mission work takes precedence over all else the church does.

(c) The role of the Seventies

We have already seen that the Seventies' quorum (or quorums) of the stake has the major responsibility for stake missionary work.

> The Seventy are to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve or the traveling high council, in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and then to the Jews. 7

The direction of stake missionary work throughout the church is in the hands of the stake presidency, and it is the stake president who recommends to the First Presidency the man best qualified to act as stake mission president. Counselors to assist the stake president are chosen from amongst the presidents of the Seventies' quorum or quorums of the stake. The Missionary president may select his own counselors, but must secure the approval of the stake presidency. The term of office for the mission president is also to be set by the stake presidency and usually lasts for two years, although it is not necessarily limited to that time. A stake mission secretary is also appointed by the stake presidency. The Handbook For Stake Missions reads as follows concerning the stake mission presidency:

> All members of the stake mission presidency should be active in teaching the Gospel. They should be among the most active, devoted and successful missionaries in the stake. This is in addition to their administrative duties. They can help to train new missionaries by

7. The Doctrine and Covenants 107:34, page 194

working with them as companions, fill in as emergency companions to others when interruptions arise, and generally set an example of service and activity to all missionaries. They also conduct missionary training classes. 8

Under the guidance of the stake mission presidency the Seventies conduct a missionary program which has a fourfold function, outlined as follows:

(1) Finding "investigators": Each quorum of Seventies is responsible for finding those persons who are willing to be taught the gospel. This process is known as "proselyting" and may be carried out in several ways. A canvass may be made amongst non-member families in the quorum area for the purpose of arranging group meetings to be held in their homes. The missionaries, and the other members of the Seventies who have been assigned by their quorum councils to carry out such canvasses for investigators, are urged to try to devote an average of forty hours per month to such work. The time spent with investigators in such places as Sunday School and Sacrament Meetings is considered to be proselyting time.

Home Teachers, who make monthly visits to the homes of all members, inquire about the names of missionary teaching prospects. The names of such likely investigators are referred to the stake missionaries through the Ward Council, on which each Seventies quorum has representation. The Ward Council is composed of the following officers: the ward bishopric, a ward clerk, the High Priest group leader, the Elders' quorum president, the Aaronic Priesthood general secretaries, the Relief Society President, the Sunday School superintendent, the Young Men's

8. Handbook For Stake Missions, page 14

Mutual Improvement Association superintendent, the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association president, the Primary president and other leaders of organizations as required. Working through the Ward Council the representative of the Seventies' quorum has the opportunity to secure the names of potential investigators obtained by the Home Teachers. At Ward Council meetings the representative of the Seventies also has the opportunity to bring in proposals about the conduct of stake missionary work. The representative may also direct problems relative to the "fellowshipping" of new converts to the other representatives of the various ward organizations. The Ward Council also provides an opportunity for coordinating the work of the Aaronic Priesthood Missionary Committee with the work of the Seventies and the stake missionaries.

Seventies themselves may serve as Home Teachers to those homes where only part of the family is in membership. Their aim in this instance is, of course, to help prepare non-members for the lessons to be taught by the missionaries. Contacts with prospective investigators are also made through members of the Aaronic Priesthood and through girls in a comparable age bracket who share in the Aaronic Priesthood missionary program.

As well as all these possibilities, an effective referral program is operated on an interstake and intrastake basis. In fact, referrals are often the most effective method of uncovering prospective investigators. Such referrals are channeled to the stake mission presidency through the Ward Council or by those individuals who remember that proselyting is the responsibility of every member. As previously

indicated Mormons are taught that the most fruitful method of referral is carried out when members invite non-member friends, relatives and acquaintances to their homes where missionaries are invited to teach them the gospel. The next best system of referral is simply to introduce missionaries to non-members, while the least effective method is the written referral card.

(2) Teaching investigators: This responsibility lies with the missionaries themselves and the procedures followed will be outlined in the next section of this chapter.

(3) "Fellowshipping" converts: The effectiveness of this program really depends on all the members of the church, for it is primarily a ward function. "Fellowshipping", as we have already mentioned, is mainly carried out through the Home Teaching program. Wherever practicable, members of the Seventies quorums become Home Teachers to the families of recent converts. The aim of this program is to encourage or "fellowship" such converts into a life of full activity in the church. Such assignments are given members of the Seventies by their quorum, group or unit leaders upon approval of the bishopric.

(4) Promoting full-time missionary work: The Seventies carry out such promotion by providing funds to assist missionaries who have financial difficulties and who might otherwise not be able to go on a full-time mission. The provision of such funds is only meant to supplement those provided by the individual himself, his family, and close friends or associates. The Seventies also promote full-time missionary work in selected cases through calls to missionary couples. These men and their wives fill the need for couples of experience and

judgment to assist in strengthening the work carried out in branches in the mission. In areas where stake and full-time missions overlap, and full-time missionaries work within the bounds of the stake, a co-operative program is established between the two groups.

(d) Teaching procedures missionaries follow

We now come to a consideration of the actual teaching procedures employed by the missionary as he seeks to discharge his responsibility to educate the investigators who have been referred to him or whom he has discovered as a result of his own efforts. The basic instruction given by missionaries is conveyed in six lessons, or "discussions" as they are called, which may be delivered in six separate sessions a few days or a week apart. The sole aim of such a teaching program is conversion and baptism, as witness the following statement from a section in the General Church Handbook entitled "Teaching The Investigator":

> Our hope in teaching the gospel is to convert people and baptize them. Your work is not finished until your contact either understands and accepts the gospel or understands and rejects it. 9

To facilitate this program and to make it possible for the missionary to master a teaching format, the Church has developed a set of instructions variously referred to as the "Systematic Teaching Program" or the "Uniform System for Teaching Investigators." A look at this teaching program, which is contained in the General Church Handbook, quickly reveals the psychological and religious principles in which the Mormon Church places its trust and which, it believes,

9. General Church Handbook, page 3

will successfully convince investigators. Most of these principles could be applied with equal validity to any secular sales promotion campaign. The missionary is admonished to be enthusiastic and to have the "attitude of success." He is counseled to be relaxed and at ease with his pupils, to show a real interest in them and to compliment them on their achievements. He is told to motivate them by expressing his confidence in their ability and is cautioned not to rely exclusively on logic or forceful speech.[10]

The system also emphasizes the validity of repetition. The teacher is encouraged to ask questions which will require the inquirer to think before answering and he is advised to have the inquirer repeat ideas in preference to words. The missionary is also cautioned to make sure that the inquirer agrees with what has been said before proceeding with the teaching program.[11]

Simplicity is another principle of the teaching program, although this is likely a concession to the limited theological background of most missionaries. They are advised to "follow the handbook dialogues", "stick to the logic and scriptures given in the dialogues", and to "answer objections with questions" while not giving in to the temptation to lecture.[12]

Certainly a most important part of each "discussion" is the personal testimony each missionary gives to his faith in the gospel of Mormonism. This is meant to be a spontaneous testimony but, as a safeguard, the appropriate place for it is noted in each of the six sessions!

10. Ibid., page 3
11. Ibid., page 3
12. Ibid., page 3

The teacher is reminded that "conversion comes only through the Holy Ghost", and that "your contacts feel his presence strongest as you bear testimony." The testimony is to be set apart from the rest of the presentation. The teacher is counseled to "pause slightly", to "look contact in the eye", and to "bear testimony in a natural tone of voice."[13]

Instruction is also given about how to address the investigator:

> In all discussions except the first, the contact probably should be called "Brother Brown" rather than "Mr. Brown". This is never offensive, and it makes the contact feel much closer to being a member of the Church, since he knows that the members refer to each other in this way. People enjoy being called "brother" and "sister". If the meeting is being held in the home of a member of the Church, consult with him in advance as to how to address his friends. In a group teaching situation, it is normally appropriate to address questions to each contact in turn and not just to one or two persons. 14

Memorization is also a key principle in the whole teaching program, and detailed instructions are given on how to memorize all the discussions. Not only is the missionary to memorize the format of all six discussions, he is also expected to memorize certain portions of the Old and New Testaments and sections from the sacred writings of his own church. An example of the scripture memorization program contained in the "Scripture Memorization and Study Guide" is included at this point:

First Discussion

The Church of Jesus Christ

Ephesians 2: 19-20

Matthew 17: 11-13

13. Ibid., page 3

14. Ibid., pages 3 and 4

Second Discussion

A New Witness for Christ

Luke 24: 36-39

Acts 20: 29-30

John 10: 14-16

Moroni 10: 4-5 [15]

The reader will note that all the passages of scripture are very short, a few verses at most. No doubt this means that many, if not all of them, are taken out of context, as is the case with most "proof-texts."

Missionaries also employ audio-visual aids in making their presentation and detailed instructions on how to use a flannel board are included in the teaching program directions. Audio-visual materials are supplied by the Church and it apparently plans to produce a filmstrip to be used for the same purpose. It will be remembered that missionaries always work in pairs. An arrangement is usually worked out whereby each of them handles a specific portion of each discussion. The missionary not involved at the moment in leading the discussion is expected to give testimony as the Spirit moves him.

In the whole teaching program the Mormons place heavy emphasis upon what they believe to be the working of the Holy Spirit. William Whalen, in his book The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World, quotes Elder Franklin D. Richards as follows:

> "The discussion plan is not designed to convince intellectually, but rather the discussions are instruments through which the Holy Ghost can work to awaken a spiritual awareness and bring a personal testimony into the hearts of the listeners that Joseph Smith is a Prophet and the Church is true." 16

15. Ibid., page 5
16. William J. Whalen, The Latter-Day Saints in the Modern Day World, page 237

Having considered the teaching principles and some of the procedures involved in the systematic teaching program of the Mormon Church, let us now give consideration to a brief but basic outline of the six discussion sessions presented by the missionaries. In the first session it is the aim of the missionary teacher to convince the inquirer that God and Jesus Christ have flesh and bone bodies, that Joseph Smith was the Prophet of God and that the true church must be identical in structure to the first century church, possessing both apostles and prophets. The missionary will further try to prove the need for a true priesthood and the lack of such in any but the Mormon Church. In accord with one of the teaching principles outlined above, the inquirer is expected to agree that the Christian Church fell into a condition of apostasy following the death of the twelve Apostles. He is also expected to accept the proposition that Joseph Smith was the one to restore the priesthood and thereby the true Church. As Whalen indicates, the missionary makes the following statement after declaring the apostasy of the early Church:

> "I know that the Church of Jesus Christ was taken completely from the earth. Once this true Church had been lost, other churches began; they continued to use his name and some of his teachings. These are the modern Catholic and Protestant churches." 17

In this and subsequent discussions the missionary will repeatedly make the point that the non-Mormon does not belong to the true Church and that, because his church does not possess a valid priesthood, his baptism is also invalid in the eyes of God. According to the Mormons none of the present churches but their own have apostles, prophets,

17. Ibid., page 240

authority to preach and baptize, or a valid priesthood. By way of concluding the first discussion the missionaries announce the date of their next service of baptism and invite the prospective convert to attend morning and evening services at the ward chapel on the following Sunday. They give the investigator two pamphlets entitled "Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story" and "Which Church Is Right?". Before leaving, the missionaries invite the investigator to have some of his relatives or friends attend the next discussion. Then they ask the inquirer to kneel with them and lead in a brief prayer. If the inquirer professes an ignorance of how to pray, brief instructions may be given him. In any event, the important think is for the missionaries to convince the investigator that he should offer the prayer. He is encouraged to do so by the missionary's attitude of expectancy and confidence in him. When prayer is offered by the inquirer he is thanked by the missionaries and made to feel glad about his compliance.

The first part of the second discussion is devoted to a review of important points in the first discussion. The inquirer is expected to affirm the flesh and bone bodily existence of God and Jesus Christ and that the Holy Ghost is a spirit "personage." The apostate condition of the Catholic and Protestant churches, as well as their invalid priesthood, is emphasized again. Finally the investigator is led into a consideration of The Book of Mormon, which he should have read about in the pamphlet entitled "Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story". A brief outline of the contents of The Book of Mormon is given by the missionary who then offers to sell or lend the book to the inquirer. The inquirer is also asked to read fifty to a hundred pages before the next

discussion and is asked to promise that he will begin a daily period of family prayer in his home.

The third discussion also begins with a review of all previous major points. These are dealt with in question and answer fashion. The inquirer is then introduced to the pamphlet "A Word of Wisdom", which contains the Mormon prohibitions against alcoholic beverages, tobacco, coffee and tea. If the investigator is a smoker the missionaries will offer to relieve him of temptation by taking his cigarettes with them on departure. Questions are asked about the inquirer's reading of The Book of Mormon and the session is concluded with prayer.

In preparation for the fourth discussion the investigator is expected to have read some 225 to 250 pages from The Book of Mormon. A condemnation of the Catholic and Protestant churches is again included in the opening remarks and a possible date for the inquirer's baptism into the Mormon Church is mentioned. The missionaries then proceed with a further coverage of Mormon theology. They explain that the consequence of Adam's fall was physical death, but that the result of a man's own personal sin is a much more serious spiritual death. Jesus, who the Mormons believe to be a "spirit son of God," overcame both physical and spiritual death. Men's sins are removed by God when they repent, obey his commandments and are baptized into the Mormon Church. The desired result of this discussion is that the inquirer shall have committed himself to accepting baptism. If this has not happened, the missionaries are expected to engage the inquirer in a further discussion which culminates with a blunt challenge to be baptized.

At this point it should be mentioned that the missionaries may not necessarily wait until the end of the fourth discussion to issue the challenge of baptism. Alvin Dyer, writing in The Challenge, says:

> When the missionary goes into a home and the people are worthy to receive the gospel, they react to it. They respond. Right then and there is when the alert missionary will want to challenge them for baptism. Normally a missionary will be seeking the opportunity to challenge for baptism after the second, third or fourth lesson, but it should be a lot sooner than that in many cases. 18

And further:

> A missionary should not jeopardize the baptism of his interested investigators by saying, "You must wait until we teach you all the lessons before discussing baptism." Instead of this, the spirit and intent of our message should lead us to say, "You have the faith to change your life, to become a better person, to repent of your sins, and to make a covenant with the Lord in the waters of baptism." This is the substance of our initial message as we testify of the mission and divinity of Jesus Christ and of the calling of Joseph Smith. 19

In other words, if deemed advisable, the challenge to accept baptism may even be issued by the missionaries after their first meeting with the investigator.

During the fifth discussion the Mormon doctrine of baptism for the dead is outlined. The missionaries explain how each person, if he is to be saved, must accept the "first principles" - that is, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism into the Mormon Church and the laying on of hands by which comes the gift of the Holy Ghost. They explain that those who die without opportunity to hear the Mormon gospel may accept it in the spirit world, but that baptism may only be administered in the physical world. Therefore, someone must submit to proxy baptism for the dead person if he is to be saved. In this connection the only

18. Dyer, The Challenge, page 48
19. Ibid., page 49

biblical reference having to do with baptism for the dead (I Cor. 15:29) is quoted. The investigator is also expected to accept the Mormon doctrine of eternal progression and belief in pre-existence. The three degrees of glory in the future life (celestial, terrestrial and telestial) are mentioned as well and the pamphlet entitled "The Plan of Salvation" is left by the missionaries on departure.

Prior to his engagement in the sixth discussion it is expected that the sincere investigator will have attended church twice on Sunday for a month, will have established daily family prayer in his home, will have read The Book of Mormon in its entirety, and will have observed the prohibitions indicated in "A Word of Wisdom." By this time he will have been exposed to a certain amount of Mormon doctrine and his teachers will then discuss the Ten Commandments, making particular reference to the observance of the Sabbath. Finally, instructions regarding tithing will be given. The investigator will be made to understand that members of the church are expected to give one-tenth of their income to the church, mainly for building purposes. He is provided with a pamphlet entitled "The Lord's Tenth" and after completing arrangements for his baptism the missionaries leave.

In commenting on the effectiveness of these teaching sessions Whalen says the following:

> The structure of the discussions reveals the efficiency of American business methods. The elders work in pairs; any fund raiser or salesman knows the psychological advantage of a two-to-one ratio. They follow a tried and tested series of lectures. They use audio-visual aids which enable the contact to see as well as hear the points being made. They leave printed material for study during the week between lessons. They involve the prospect step by step into the Mormon Church until the only step which remains is baptism. They plant the idea in

his mind in the first and all succeeding lessons that his previous baptism is invalid and that he will surely wish to receive a baptism recognized by God. 20

So it is that thousands of persons are brought into membership in the Mormon Church annually as a direct result of the teaching ministry of the Mormon missionaries.

(e) Financial arrangements for mission work

The claim that the Mormon Church has "no professional clergy" may be questioned in some respects. It is true that there are no clergy in the traditional sense, but there certainly are members of the Priesthood who make their profession church work. The General Authorities of the church and those whom they appoint as assistants do receive substantial remuneration. Stake presidents and ward bishops are granted a very small allowance for monthly expenses. Many church leaders and officials carry on their own private professions or businesses, but there are also many full-time employees in leadership positions and a great many involved in administrative or secretarial roles. The complex organization and structure of the Mormon Church demands that kind of paid professional staff.

However, the Mormon missionary is usually quite another matter. As indicated in the previous chapter, one of the conditions which must be met before a prospective missionary may be recommended is the assurance that the candidate is capable of supporting himself in the field, or that he may count on the financial support of his family or friends. One other possibility, also previously mentioned, is the

20. Whalen, The Latter-day Saints In the Modern Day World, page 243

partial support which may come to the missionary from a Priesthood quorum or some other organization of the church. Such funds for missionary support are sometimes made available on a type of scholarship basis. The church owns an insurance company, through which funds are made available to carry out mission programs.

In the field missionaries usually look for accommodation in private homes rather than in hotels, motels or apartments. In this way missionaries may economize and may also make a witness to their landlords. In the past it has been estimated that a frugal missionary can get by on as little as $60 a month, but this figure may easily have been adjusted due to increased costs of living. On their mission rounds missionaries often walk, although in Canada at least they may often be seen driving Rambler cars. One of the most respected Mormon leaders in the United States is Michigan Governor George Romney, the head of American Motors, which produces the Rambler. The author is not aware of any special arrangements whereby Ramblers are made available to the church for mission work, but it may very well be that some kind of advantageous system has been devised.

As far as the costs of transportation to the mission field are concerned, the missionary is expected to pay up to $100 toward the cost of travel from Salt Lake City or any other place of instruction. The church pays the balance of transportation costs over that amount. The church also pays the full cost of travel from the mission field to the home of every missionary who has completed a regular full-time mission and has been granted an honorable release. Such allowances are based upon the fare for the least costly mode of transportation by the most direct route.

(f) Variations of mission activity

For the purposes of the brief concluding section of this chapter we shall be thinking of "mission" in its widest possible context. When we speak of missionary work in terms of anything which serves to communicate the beliefs of a particular church, sect or cult, it soon becomes evident that we must widen our horizons. We must look beyond the traditional types of missionary activity, and even beyond people themselves, to the "tools" or "techniques" those people utilize in carrying on their work. It is therefore wise that we conclude this consideration of how missionary work is carried on by making at least a passing reference to the following programs or undertakings.

The Church Welfare Program

It might well be argued that the church's Welfare Program better qualifies as an auxiliary organization of the Church, but the writer has chosen to include it here as a variation of mission activity. Briefly speaking, the Welfare Program is the means whereby the Mormon Church seeks to minister unto those in its ranks who are unemployed, handicapped, sick, aged, impoverished or in need of other kinds. Benjamin Alward describes the purpose of the Welfare Program as follows:

> The aim of the Church Welfare Program has a threefold objective. First, to help people to help themselves by placing in gainful employment those who are able to work. Second, to provide employment within the Welfare Program in so far as possible, for those who receive aid from it, and who are unable to find gainful employment otherwise. Third, to supply the sick and needy with necessities of life, each according to his family, his circumstances, and his needs; this to be done, not as a dole, but in recognition of past faithfulness and his present willingness to accept the program and labor in it to the extent of his ability. 21

21. Alward, A Look At Mormonism, page 101

The church apparently operates on the premise that the usual type of relief payment takes away a man's self-respect and does nothing to rehabilitate him. Mormons believe that responsibility for one's financial stability or well-being lies first of all with the individual, secondly with his family and thirdly with the church.[22] Those members who do not require any help from the Church contribute time, labor and services to the well-being of less fortunate members. The general membership of the Church is expected to fast once a month and to donate the equivalent cost of two meals to a fund from which the needy of the Church are provided for.

Various projects are operative in the Church which produce such things as food products, clothing, fuel, furniture and bedding, etc. These products are not sold but given to those needy Mormons who bring an order from their bishop. Such merchandise is stored in warehouses known as "Bishop's Storehouses". Those items which cannot be grown on church-owned farms or produced in some other way, are purchased with the money derived from such sources as the "fast system" described above. Mormons also donate used clothing, furniture, appliances, etc., to the Deseret Industries, a project which operates much like the Goodwill Industries or the Salvation Army. Donated articles are repaired by elderly or handicapped persons employed by the Church and then sold at a nominal price in the Church's retail stores, or given away. Deseret Industries also runs a factory which turns out such things as clothing, blankets and rugs.

22. The Welfare Program appears to be mainly operative amongst "faithful" members of the church.

The Welfare Program is aimed almost exclusively at members of the church, so the reader may wonder what all this has to do with missionary work. However, even though it may not be missionary work in the usual sense, we should not minimize the impact this well-integrated and Church-sponsored social security program makes on prospective members of the Church. Especially is this true in the case of part-member families. As Whalen points out, "In a world which many people see as a dog-eat-dog affair, the picture of a 2,000,000 member fellowship interested in both the spiritual and material welfare of its members facilitates the work of the thousands of young Mormon missionaries."[23]

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir

The world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir has been broadcasting Sunday morning programs from Temple Square in Salt Lake City since 1929. The music of this 375 voice choir is carried by at least 165 radio stations in North America. The choir has produced many recordings, gone on tours of Europe and made television appearances. This kind of exposure has resulted in its being the best known choir in America and one of the best known in many other parts of the world. It has, by the quality of its musical achievement, inspired admiration in the hearts and minds of countless folk, many of whom may know little or nothing at all about the Mormon Church. It therefore deserves mention as one of the forces or factors in the broader picture of mission activity.

23. Whalen, The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World, page 219

The Mormon Press

The Church operates many business enterprises, one of which is The Deseret News, a daily Salt Lake City newspaper. Apparently it avoids a "preaching" type of format, but it does publish a weekend supplement, the Church News, which keeps Mormons and non-Mormons alike up to date on the activities of the Mormon Church. It does not have a particularly big circulation and has nothing of a national reputation, as does the only other daily American newspaper owned by a church, the Christian Science Monitor. The biggest Mormon periodical is Improvement Era, which features color photography and boasts a circulation twice that of the Deseret News.

The Deseret News Press is claimed to be one of the largest printing and binding firms in the western United States. The Mormons write and publish all their own Sunday School and Church materials and the Deseret Book Store reports annual sales in excess of $1,500,000. It cannot be denied that these publications also serve to keep the Mormon Church visible and add impetus to missionary endeavors.

Radio and TV

The Mormon Church owns radio station KSL and KSL - TV, both of which are CBS affiliates in Salt Lake City. KSL was the first radio station between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Coast and began broadcasting in 1922. The station carries the aforementioned programs of the Tabernacle Choir and a weekly message by Richard L. Evans, one of the Twelve Apostles. For the last five years the Church has been operating a short-wave station (WRUL) which is the only commercial station in the United States broadcasting tc an overseas

audience. Its studios are located in New York and broadcasts in English and Spanish are sent to Europe and Latin America. Among its listings are three religious programs per week in English and three in Spanish.

Annual Outdoor Pageant

Each year in August the Church stages the largest outdoor pageant in the nation on Hill Cumorah near Palmyra, New York. The pageant depicts the story of The Book of Mormon and is presented by missionaries working in the Eastern States Mission of the Mormon Church. The missionaries are aided by students and a special chorus from Brigham Young University. More than 100,000 people view the pageant which has been presented annually since 1946.

LDS Hospital

The Church operates the Dr. W. H. Groves Hospital in Salt Lake City. It is a private general hospital and serves as a coordinating center for other hospitals in Utah, Wyoming and Idaho. Altogether the Church gives support to fifteen hospitals which carry on research in heart diseases, cancer, leukemia and other ailments.

* * * * * *

It has been the main purpose of this thesis to study the Mormon concept of mission and to see how that philosophy is translated into action through the missionary endeavors of the Mormon Church. We have looked briefly at the history of Mormonism and how the church has grown and developed. We have also concerned outselves with the religious education and training of church members, and in particular the missionaries. Finally, we have considered how missionary work is

carried out. It now remains for us to make an evaluation of those policies and procedures espoused by the Mormon Church and it is with such an evaluation that we shall conclude this work.

Chapter V

EVALUATION

(a) Effectiveness of methods

In any evaluation of the mission system of the Mormon Church one simply cannot overlook the weight of evidence supplied by statistics alone. It is true that figures do not tell the whole of any story, be it in the realm of business, politics, the church, or any other field. Nevertheless, statistics do provide one legitimate and worthwhile indication of the effectiveness of certain programs and procedures. In the concluding section of this chapter we shall consider what the goal of missionary endeavor should be if it is not to be the gaining of converts, and thereby the creation of statistics, but for the present let us concern ourselves with those things which facts and figures do tell us. On a purely statistical basis it must be argued that the Mormon mission system is one of the most effective in the world. A church which is able to involve about half of its adult membership in responsible and active positions within its various organizations and which appears to be reproducing its total membership within approximately a ten year period, must be given credit where credit is due.

As already pointed out, the Mormons are proud of the fact that theirs is a church in which there are no professional clergy, for every member is expected to perform ministerial functions. The Mormons may very likely misinterpret the role of the clergy in other churches but the same charge could be made of many other people who are members of those churches. One of the things which most impresses non-Mormons is the way in which the Mormon laity assume responsibility for missionary work. The admiration many people feel for the way in which Mormons

witness so boldly to what they believe, is generally not greatly diminished by the questionable history of the Mormon Church, or even by the theological naïveté of many of her missionaries. To put it simply, the Mormon missionary is the biggest single reason for his Church's amazing growth. William Whalen expresses it well when he says:

> The living example of these thousands of young men and women, the cream of Mormonism, postponing their education, vocational and even marital plans to serve their church without pay probably exerts a greater influence on the Gentile public than their apologetical skills. Even if they made no converts at all they would be helping to reshape the image of Mormonism which in nineteenth-century America meant only polygamy and suspected treason. 1

But not only does the Mormon mission system make an impact on the non-Mormon world, it would appear to strengthen the loyalty and devotion of those who are themselves engaged in it. The missionary himself who, in the course of his duties, is called upon many times to testify personally to what he believes is the truth of the Mormon gospel, can hardly fail to deepen his own personal commitment. Thus the Mormon Church has one of the highest conversion rates in the world and is also able to maintain a firm hold upon its membership. Whalen makes this comment in the concluding paragraph of his chapter on the mission system:

> If the converts made by this six-lesson system soon lapsed into their former indifference or if the measure of commitment were slight we could question its effectiveness. But we have no evidence that many of these converts leave the Mormon Church after baptism. The tight Mormon organization keeps them involved in Church activities, and the day-by-day commitment involved in regular prayer, church attendance, observance of the Word of Wisdom and tithing provides a satisfying way of life for many thousands who once called themselves Anglicans and Methodists and Catholics and Baptists. 2

1. Whalen, The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World, page 231
2. Ibid., page 244

In this paragraph Whalen has stated the greatest strength of the Mormon system, pertaining both to the winning of converts and to their retention. Fawn Brodie, in her biography of Joseph Smith, states the same thing in another way when she says:

> Before his death Joseph had established an evangelical socialism, in which every man worked feverishly to build the Kingdom of God upon earth. This has grown into a vast pyramidal organization, in which the workers finance the church, advertise it, and do everything, but govern it. The Mormon people are still bent on building the Kingdom of God, and everyone from the twelve-year-old deacon to the eighty-year-old high priest is made to feel that upon him depends the realization of that ideal. Here as in no other church in America the people are the church and the church the people. It is not only work and sacrifice, but a sense of participation and responsibility that generates the steadfast Mormon loyalty. 3

However, it would not be true to say that the Mormon Church is without those who are inactive or those who are only partially or periodically active. There are many young men who do not advance as they should through the usual promotions in the priesthood because they are not considered worthy. This usually means that they drink alcoholic beverages, smoke, or behave in some other manner at variance with the Word of Wisdom. Many would not qualify for recommendation as missionaries for the same reason. There are men who never move beyond the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood and who are known as "adult Aaronics." The writer can testify from personal experience that there are also many "Jack Mormons," or persons who are Mormon in name only and who do not participate in church life at all. It is difficult to categorize such marginal or non-participating members, for on occasion some of them may become

3. Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History, page 402

involved in specific activities for a limited time. Some of them contribute financially also, though they do not participate in any other way. But even among such "fringe" groups as these it is not common for families to break away from the Church. Generally speaking, the many ties which bind all Mormon families to the Church - educational, recreational, economic, spiritual - make it extremely difficult for persons to disassociate themselves from the Mormon Church or join some other church. The same forces which are operative in the life of active families are also brought to bear on the families of nominal members. It can be an extreme inconvenience, even a highly damaging economic and social hardship, for such folk to extricate themselves.

Another aspect of Mormon Church life and mission activity warrants comment. Despite the high degree of activism on the part of the membership and the perfection of institutional control and organization, the church still suffers from a malady common to most others. There is a tendency for higher responsibility to rest in the hands of too few people. In the case of the Mormons, those who have assumed the key roles of leadership have generally been business men of advanced years. As a result the Church has adopted an ultra-conservative theological position, and of late a noticeable number of younger Mormons have begun to experience a certain degree of estrangement from their religious heritage. The writer recalls certain newspaper and magazine articles, and even personal conversations with Mormons, in which the opinion was expressed that the church has been able to keep its membership so busy and has involved them in its

programs and purposes to such an extent that they have lost the ability to think for themselves about where all such activity is leading them. Others are critical of the salesman-like methods employed by the missionaries and feel that a different approach is desirable for the times in which they now live. In general there seem to be three main reasons why a certain percentage of younger members are experiencing a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the Church. First, the intellectuals amongst them find it increasingly difficult to reconcile what they are learning from the world in which they live with their creeds and religious traditions. Second, a growing number have begun to express disapproval of certain specific church policies: the present leading source of such dissatisfaction being the Church's refusal to allow Negroes full participation in the life of the Church. A third source of frustration is the above-mentioned continual round of religious activities which, for some, seem to have less and less significance in today's society than they had in those frontier days during which the Mormon empire was being established.

Perhaps the final comment which should be made in this connection is that the Mormon Church appears to be experiencing the beginnings of a process which parallels in some respects what has been going on in other churches for over half a century now. As is the case with those other churches, this spirit of discontent, of reaction, revolt and reform, is being inspired by pressures imposed by the secular world. How the Mormon Church will respond to such challenge remains to be seen. Will she be able to reinterpret her gospel in terms more meaningful to the age of space exploration? Will she be wise enough to reassess her

motivation for engaging in missionary work and will such reassessment result in a new approach to mission activity? Perhaps more important still, will she dare to submit her sacred literature to the process of critical analysis? Church membership figures may continue to climb but the future of Mormonism may well depend upon the answers to such questions, whether the Mormons realize it or not.

(b) What can be learned?

We come now to the final, and in some senses the most important phase of this thesis, for it was our announced intention at the outset to see if we could learn anything from a study of the Mormon mission system which might aid us in a rethinking of the whole concept of mission in today's world. From the present study it would be hard to deny that a sense of "mission" permeates a great deal of what is done in the name of religion within the framework of Mormonism. From the earliest days of his religious development the Mormon is keenly aware that his church has a mission and that he as an individual has a personal responsibility and obligation to take his place within that mission activity. We began this work by referring to the words of Hans Margull, who speaks about the "come structure" of most Christian congregations.[4] Too often it has been true that many Christian Churches have directed the maximum amount of their effort toward "coming" together in fellowship and a minimum toward "going" forth in the name and spirit of Christ to witness to the love of God. Needless to say, whenever and wherever this has taken place, it has represented

4. See Introduction, page 9

a denial of the true spirit of Christianity. Too often the average Church member has assumed that such a witness is the responsibility of the professional religionist. There has been, and still is on the part of many members, little or no recognition of the fact that their faith places an obligation upon them. In this respect, the success of the Mormons may be seen as something of a judgment on other churches. In his book God's Colony In Man's World, George Webber speaks about this loss of a sense of mission on the part of many churches:

> A true church is an outpost of the kingdom of God in a particular spot in the world to bear witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. A church is a mission living by the foolishness of God in a world that sometimes hates it, sometimes is indifferent, and sometimes seeks to take it captive. Any church that does not recognize the basic purpose for its existence is in jeopardy of its life. The predicament of the church in America is precisely that it does not recognize that it is in a missionary situation. Missions are seen only as a special project of the church, through which men and women are sent overseas to preach in distant lands. Even the local mission of the church is a home missionary venture off somewhere in Indian territory or in the world of the inner city. We have forgotten that mission is the task of the church wherever it finds itself. 5

And, we might add, the church is not only a collective membership, it is also the individual member wherever he finds himself. In other words, mission is the task of the individual Christian, and if his participation in the life of the church, or lack of it, fails to prepare him for that task then the life of that church is indeed in jeopardy. Therefore, one of the first things we may learn from the Mormons is that it is not good enough to expect that mission work should be carried out by a small, elite corps of "specialists." Nor is it good enough to assume that the average member's willingness to become involved in the mission life of his church will flow automatically from his understanding of the gospel and his love of Christ.

5. George W. Webber, God's Colony In Man's World, page 29

These things may be supplemented effectively by a program of training for mission. The Mormons have recognized the need for people to have a role to play in the life of the church. They have also seen fit to prepare their people to carry out that role effectively by giving them specific training in how to be witnesses to their faith.

It has been stated more than once in this thesis that one of the key concepts of Mormonism is involvement. One is not only baptized into the fellowship as a convert, one is also immediately and intimately involved in the life of the church. The member is given responsibility and is expected to produce results. He is depended upon, even though he may be strictly supervised. He is made to understand that the part he plays in the work of the church is vital and necessary. No one would deny that the same is intended to be true of most other churches. Certainly it is a key emphasis in the Protestant tradition where the ministry of the laity has held a special significance in theory at least. But, what has been the actual situation? Far too few of the other churches have involved a large enough portion of their membership in active and responsible positions. The minister or priest, albeit unwillingly, has too often assumed the major share of responsibility for organizational and administrative tasks. In many instances he has largely become an administrator or an executive officer instead of what he was trained and intended to be - a teacher, preacher and pastor to his people.

The Mormons have something to teach other churches about involvement, particularly as it pertains to young people. In the auxiliary organizations of the Mormon Church and, more specifically, in the

quorums of the Priesthood, young Mormons are not only provided with the opportunity to grow in their understanding of the Mormon faith but also to give leadership and assume responsibility within their church. Such a system does two things. It convinces the young person that he is a valued member of the church with an important ministry to perform, and it also prepares him for that time when he will be called upon to devote two or more years of his life to missionary work. Indeed, it does more than that. It prepares him to be a witnessing member of his religious community for the rest of his life. When we think of the situation which so often exists in other churches it may well give us pause. There is little reason to deny the reluctance of many congregations in allowing young people to assume positions involving any real degree of responsibility or authority. A very small percentage is ever asked to serve at a decision-making level. Few have more than an occasional opportunity to lead the worshipping community in worship, and little is done to help them in witnessing and expressing an active concern amongst non-church young people. It is a fact that many churches experience a disturbing loss of young people who have entered adolescence. Those who remain within the fellowship of the church to receive confirmation are brought into a membership which is singularly lacking in the demands it makes upon them and in the opportunities it provides for meaningful service. There is little wonder that many of these young folk lapse into a very nominal membership which is obviously lacking in appreciation of the true mission of the Church.

Having said all this, it would not be fair to proceed without considering the other side of the coin for at least a moment. The last impression the writer wishes to convey is that the answer to all such

problems is simply involvement. A feeling of being needed and having a job to perform can be vitally important, but that does not mean the Church should keep people busy simply for the sake of busyness. We have already commented upon the dissatisfaction of some of the younger members of the Mormon Church for that very reason. In other words, involvement in the life of the Church should spring from a deep spiritual motive if it is to be anything more than activism. Action should result from fresh insight into the nature and purposes of God. If it does not it is activity solely designed to keep the membership mobile, stirred up and under the impression that it is achieving something. In reality nothing may be accomplished of any real and lasting significance. It is at this point that one of the most severe criticisms of Mormonism may be made. Because it lacks in spiritual depth and because its founder gave to the world no new spiritual insights, but rather a perversion and corruption of already existing truth, the resulting structure is lacking at the level of ultimate importance. Fawn Brodie has put it well when she says:

> The religion that Joseph founded was all too well adapted to the milieu from which it sprang - the milieu of frontier America, with all its crudity as well as vigor. And the present church betrays its heritage in all its works, including the road signs which lead to its shrines. Along the lovely White River Valley of Vermont winds a highway leading to Sharon. As one approaches Joseph's birthplace, one comes upon a marker that heralds the proximity of this Bethlehem of Mormonism. Its message is too ingenuously deceptive of the true missionary spirit it embodies. "Visit," it urges, "the Joseph Smith Monument, World's Largest Polished Shaft."
>
> One cannot say that the prophet has been too ill served by this sign, for it only symbolizes the barrenness of his spiritual legacy. Joseph had a ranging fancy, a revolutionary vigor, and a genius for improvisation, and what he could mold with these he made well. With them he created a book amd a religion, but he could not create a truly spiritual content for that religion. He could canalize aspirations

formed elsewhere into a new structure and provide the ritualistic shell of new observances. But within the dogma of the church there is no new Sermon on the Mount, no new saga of redemption, nothing for which Joseph himself might stand. His martyrdom was a chance event, wholly incidental to the creed that he created. 6

Activity and involvement are not enough, especially in a world in which people often do not wish to become involved. As never before people are hungering for real and honest answers to the deepest questions life poses, and to offer them a stone instead of bread is surely the worst kind of betrayal.

A question about the missionary's own involvement also merits our attention. As we have seen, the Mormons possess a complex hierarchical system. Members of the hierarchy are greatly revered and much prestige is attached to advancement within the church's leadership. To what extent is opportunity for advancement in that hierarchy a motivation for those involved in missionary work? There are several reasons for suggesting that it may have a direct bearing upon such activity. To begin with, those who have been on a mission are afforded a considerable amount of recognition. Those who fail to advance through the quorums of the Priesthood and do not qualify for missionary work (e.g. "adult Aaronics") are definitely viewed with lesser esteem. Advancement within the hierarchy of the church is dependent upon the successful completion of duties at lower levels of leadership, including missionary work. In fact, much of the philosophy and structure of Mormonism, including the concept of an after-life, seems to be based on the premise that one must work his way up in the church to assure the right kind of future, both here and hereafter. Surely we may place a serious question mark beside

6. Brodie, No Man Knows My History, page 403

such motivation where missionaries are concerned. If mission work is undertaken because its satisfactory completion will guarantee success and assure the future for the missionary, its whole basis is in question. This is a point with which the Mormons should concern themselves. Other churches would do well to avoid the dangers inherent in such a hierarchical system.

As already indicated, a study of the Mormon mission system not only reveals things which could be done by other churches, it also points up certain pitfalls which should be avoided. Surely the most important of these comes to light in a consideration of the motive for mission. The traditional view of mission or evangelism in the Christian Church has been that its aim is to convert people to Jesus Christ. In many denominations the goal of mission outreach has also been an increase in church attendance and membership. Such increases in attendance and membership have often been the only measure of success for the various programs of mission work or evangelism undertaken by the Church. Missionaries or evangelists have made detailed reports of the number of converts gained through their efforts and church boards and committees have anxiously awaited year-end reports to see if the hoped-for increases in church attendance, membership and financial support have materialized. Often the social, political and moral implications of the gospel have only been superficially or incidentally related to the mission program. Some churches still maintain this traditional approach in their evangelistic programs and mission activity. It is not hard to see that this is almost precisely the position of the Mormon Church. The aim of Mormon missionary work is the conversion and baptism of those to whom the program is directed.

Missionaries are instructed not to cease their efforts in behalf of an inquirer until they are satisfied that he understands and accepts the Mormon gospel and is ready for baptism, or until they are satisfied that he understands and rejects the same. In the latter instance the inquirer is usually dismissed, for apparently there can be no middle ground. The fantastic amount of time, money and energy expended in genealogical research, and in keeping many other kinds of records and statistics, indicates that conversion rates and membership figures are of extreme importance to the Mormons. The obvious pride they take in being one of the fastest growing churches in the world, and in reporting their annual number of baptisms and the number of their missionaries in the field is understandable and admirable in one respect. But it also indicates the importance attached to numbers by the Mormons. Such a temptation is to be avoided at all costs by those whose motive for mission is larger than the mere winning of converts. Rex R. Dolan has the following to say about the newer motive for mission activity finding acceptance in more and more churches today:

> In the past the goal of evangelism was conversion and the building up of the church. Today the goal is the establishment of the kingdom, that is, the confrontation of all areas of society - business, labour, education and politics - with the claims of the gospel; the infiltration of the spirit of Christ into every area and aspect of public as well as private life. The building up of the church is important only insofar as it serves the kingdom.
>
> The goal is not larger congregations, increased memberships, busier church organizations, but new relationships between people in the world, new relationships based on honesty, humility, and acceptance. 7

The only truly acceptable motive for mission is that which aims at meeting and serving the needs of people, whether of body, mind or spirit, not for the purpose of winning converts, but simply because those needs

7. Rex R. Dolan, The Big Change, page 64

exist. This philosophy of mission enables the "missionary" to give himself in love to others and demand nothing in return, not even belief. Conversion still remains important, but in the light of such a motive it takes on a new significance and new emphases. It involves more than a private experience related almost exclusively to "religious" decisions and attitudes. The aim of such mission activity is to make possible a "conversion" which will enable the person to view all of life "through the eyes of Christ," to see Jesus' point of view in every area of life. This kind of conversion does not come quickly and abruptly, nor does it occur once and for all. It takes place gradually and involves one's whole life from beginning to end in a growing process. To quote Dolan again:

> The new goal is less precise, more difficult to identify, since the love, truth and humility of the kingdom are often manifest in subtle, inconspicuous ways. Calculation of success in the new evangelism is difficult since it is hardly possible to measure achievement towards a better world. Yet advocates of the new evangelism would contend that the new goal is closer to the objective of our Lord's ministry than that of traditional evangelism. 8

A mission philosophy which over-emphasizes membership statistics makes it far too easy for the Church to develop concern for the wrong things where people are concerned. For those who are concerned more about the way in which the spirit of Jesus Christ is communicated to the world than about the particular denomination to which people belong, this is a very important consideration. The motive for mission should always be that people may come to know and love Jesus Christ. This they will do if there are those willing to care as he cared, and willing to care because he cared. The witness the Church makes and the invitation it extends through its missionary endeavor, whether it be a formal program

8. Ibid., page 65

carried out by specialists, or an informal pattern adopted by church members wherever they are in the world, should be a witness and an invitation extended to all men at all times in all places. It should surely be a witness and an invitation which does not aim primarily at "honest and good" or "worthy" people, but at the social outcast, the derelict, at the immoral and the amoral, the disinherited and the dispossessed. To do or to profess anything less is to be Pharisaical and to deny the greatest incentive of all for mission activity, that Christ died for all men.

It remains to consider how best this program of mission activity or of evangelism may be carried out, and here again other churches may learn something from the Mormons. In many churches today the emphasis on mission is being shifted more and more from the clergyman to the layman, and this is only as it should be. The Mormons are well aware of the reasons for a lay-oriented mission program. There are not enough religious professionals to do the job properly, and more important than that, evangelism needs to be carried on where people are. That is one of the real strengths of the Mormon system, for many Mormon missionaries work at their regular secular jobs while performing missionary work. The clergyman, although he meets daily with people and problems from the world around him, is not as intimately involved in making a living amidst the complexities and pressures of the competitive world of industry, business, the professions, etc. Laymen make their livelihood in the world of business and industry and a great number of their daily contacts are with people who have no church connection and who may never have considered seriously the

claims of the Christian gospel. Clergy have a vital role to perform in training laymen in the gospel, but laymen have a unique opportunity to take that gospel out into the world.

In this regard it is a wise step that many denominations are taking in developing new forms of short-term mission work. The Mormons have great success with this approach, and no doubt many who would not wish to devote their whole lives to missionary work would be willing to give two or three years of their lives, their talents and abilities, as do the young Mormon missionaries. This kind of system may involve a greater investment of money in training programs, etc., with a relatively short return from those so trained, but can the value and effectiveness of such a program be seriously questioned? There are scores of people within the Church, both young and old, whom the writer firmly believes would respond to this type of a challenge. There are many, in fact, who do not now respond because the church has not always had the vision and the courage to challenge them seriously and to expect enough of them.

Probably there will always be a place for programs of mass evangelism of one kind or another. Programs of specialized mission activity will also be necessary, but more and more the Church is learning that far-reaching and lasting changes in people's lives take place through continuing personal relationships. A regular and continual growth in the Christian life should be the aim of the Church for those who are touched by its mission activity. That kind of growth and development demands the interest and the concern of individuals or groups who, over an extended period of time, are trained and prepared

to discuss, interpret and share with others the application of the Christian faith in life situations. Particularly is this true wherever the Church is involved with folk who are not church-oriented. As Rex Dolan says:

> The unchurched have little or no contact with the rites, rubrics, doctrines and terminology of the church. They do not think in religious terms. If we are going to reach these people with the gospel we must begin and perhaps continue with no formal religious discussion or church contact, but simply warm personal interest. We must enable Christ to walk "incognito" through our involvement in the practical, often material, everyday needs of people. 9

There will be those who react to this proposition by saying that it is not enough, or even by saying that it is a betrayal of the gospel. But is this a true assessment of the situation? Does it not rather present a far more realistic and practical opportunity for the laity of the Church to discharge their Christian responsibility for mission? We conclude with the following quotation from Dr. Dolan:

> In the past many laymen avoided the evangelistic task because they did not feel they were familiar with the faith, knowledgeable in scripture, trained in theology. Today a layman can't get off the hook so easily. All know something about love; we've received and given it. Evangelism is the activity of love translated into the human needs of hope, acceptance, concern, understanding, or food, shelter, and clothing. Someone may ask, "Does evangelism not finally involve the naming of Christ, words of prayer, an invitation to church?" It may, but it may not if we are really serious about evangelizing. Our Lord frequently told his followers, "Tell no man that I am the Christ." He was not concerned to be named or labelled, unless it might meet a human need, or answer a question that was honestly being asked. Christians have no obligation today to pin a Christian name tag to every act. If it is loving it is Christian and part of the evangelistic task. 10

10. Ibid., page 69

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